



This simply stunning and endearing Streak-chested Antpitta stole our hearts, comfortably becoming our bird of the trip! (all photos taken by Pete Morris, Costa Rica, 2018)

ULTIMATE COSTA RICA

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Following a happy return to the avian rich Costa Rica last year, I was once again at the helm for the 2018 Ultimate Costa Rica tour, a tour I am rapidly growing to love! Costa Rica is now an affluent and modern country, but still impeccably clean and friendly, and with the added bonus of a 'green edge' which has led to the establishment of many nature reserves throughout the country, giving many options to find the country's wonderful birds and mammals. In summary, this year's Ultimate Costa Rica tour was, yet again, highly successful. As with all Birdquest tours, we focused on finding the specialities rather than building a big list, though we still ended up recording an impressive 590 species between us, including just a few that were heard only. This included a high percentage of the country's specialities that were on offer on our itinerary. With its three endemic bird areas, regional endemism is a strong influence in the Costa Rican avifauna, and many of these charismatic species were among the tour highlights. Picking out the highlights from nearly 600 species is never easy, but

it was the endearing Streak-chested Antpitta which stole our hearts and became our bird of the trip! Almost as popular was our superb series of sightings of flashy Sunbitterns, whilst the amazing Three-wattled Bellbird was once again popular, and Yellow-billed and Turquoise Cotingas also delighted. Nightbirds did us proud, with fantastic views of superb species such as Bare-shanked and Vermiculated Screech Owls, Crested Owl and Dusky Nightjar. Our 42 species of hummingbirds included fabulous studies of colourful gems such as Violet Sabrewing and Fiery-throated Hummingbird, antswarms were attended by such charismatic species as Ocellated, Bicoloured and Zeledon's Antbirds. New World quails were particularly prominent, and we enjoyed great looks at Buffy-crowned Wood Partridge, Spotted, Marbled, Black-breasted and the rare Black-eared Wood Quails, and we also lucked in to a confiding Thicket Tinamou. Then who can forget the showy Sungrebes, the array of remarkable manakins, the colourful motmots, the amazing Snowcaps or the unique Zeledonia? Or the amazing quail-doves and variety of crakes and rails!! Oh, and then there was the Resplendent Quetzal... just dazzling! In fact there were far too many highlights, so I'd better get on with the report!!



New World Quails were particularly kind to us this year... The wonderful Spotted Wood Quail was my personal favourite!

Having gathered at our pleasant hotel outside of San José, we kicked off the tour with an early start in the cold mountain air at Vólcan Irazú. Our very first bird of the tour was a cute Bare-shanked Screech Owl fixed in the spotlight, and this was followed minutes later by the highland speciality, Dusky Nightjar. Not a bad way to begin. As the sun rose and the air warmed, we switched our attention to another species, and although we could hear the raucous calls of Buffy-crowned Wood Partridges close by, actually seeing one proved difficult for a while. One scurried across, others called until finally one strutted out like a rooster in front of us, and we



Bare-shanked Screech Owl and Dusky Nightjar were quite literally our first two birds of the tour!



went on to get great views of a pair of this often tough-to-see species. Next on the agenda was a fantastic male Resplendent Quetzal which drew 'oohs' and 'aahs' as it posed in the scope... we were on a roll!!! We spent the next couple of hours exploring the forest patches, canyons and paramo on the lower slopes of the mighty Irazú, notching up a good list of smart specialities including numerous Sooty Thrushes, Black-billed Nightingale-Thrushes, Large-footed Finches, Mountain Elaenias, Acorn Woodpeckers, wonderful Black-cheeked and Flame-throated Warblers and Chestnut-capped Brushfinch. Higher up, it didn't take long to find some Volcano Juncos, numerous Volcano Hummingbirds, and other high altitude specialities we enjoyed included singing Timberline Wrens, Slaty Flowerpiercer, several groups of Sooty-capped Bush Tanagers and even our first Long-tailed Silky-Flycatchers.



We followed up the nightbirds with great looks at the difficult Buffy-crowned Wood Partridge and our first Resplendent Quetzal, as well as more regular highland species such as Timberline Wren (below) and Dusky-headed Chlorospingus.



It was a fine morning, but we had an agenda, and made our way down to Carara on the coast in time for lunch. We then made our way to Tarcoles, and boarded our boat to explore the peaceful Tarcoles River. Heading downriver, the number of American Crocodiles was at times pretty impressive, particularly given their huge size (some were up to 6 meters or 20 feet!). We began looking at a few shorebirds including Short-billed Dowitcher and smart Bare-throated Tiger Herons and then made our way to the estuary's mangrove habitat where we enjoyed fine views of several (Mangrove) Common Black Hawks, our only Plumbeous Kites of the tour, Roseate Spoonbills and American White Ibis. Magnificent Frigatebirds soared overhead, but with darkening skies, it wasn't long before we began to experience our first of a few torrential downpours! Birding from the boat was not too easy, but with effort, we managed to find most of the mangrove specialities including numerous Mangrove Warblers, Mangrove Vireo and Panamanian and Northern Scrub Flycatcher. Some smart Boat-billed Herons were much admired, and an American Pygmy Kingfisher showed well. As the skies cleared a little, we noted our first Red-lore and Yellow-naped Amazons and numerous raucous Scarlet Macaws showed overhead. We rounded off the trip watching Lesser Nighthawks feeding overhead, and then made our way to our Carara Hotel, flashed our wristbands, and investigated the bar, for those wristbands were good for more than the dinner!!



American Pygmy Kingfisher and Scarlet Macaw... two of the stars of our first boat trip on the Tarcoles River!

We spent most of the next day at the excellent Carara National Park. As the park has rather strange and restrictive opening hours, we began along a trail where we found a fine pair of Northern Royal Flycatchers. A fine White-whiskered Puffbirds sat motionless in the midstorey, and Rufous-and White Wrens and Slate-headed Tody-Flycatchers chortled from the undergrowth. We then shifted location, and bought our permits to enter the reserve. The excellent trails allow easy access to some great forest, and we were soon admiring new species. Our prime target proved tricky, but eventually we had the most amazing encounter with a completely endearing Streak-chested Antpitta which showed so well and at close range! A stunning Black-faced Anthrush performed brilliantly in the forest, and a male Great Curassow was a surprise at this site. Gradually we notched up many of the common forest species including a Stripe-throated Hermit singing at ground level, lovely Baird's and Slaty-tailed Trogons, Long-billed Gnatwren, Lesser Greenlets, Spotted Woodcreepers, Buff-throated Fo-liage-gleaner, Black-hooded Antshrike, Dusky Antbirds, showy Chestnut-backed Antbirds, Yellow-bellied Fly-catcher and an array of wrens including a smart Black-bellied Wren, numerous Riverside and Rufous-breasted Wrens and striking Rufous-backed Wrens.



Several cracking Black-faced Anthruses were much appreciated!

After a pleasant lunch and a break, we headed back to the forest and settled by a small stream. Over the next hour or so, a procession of birds came down to bathe. Numerous attractive Red-capped and Blue-crowned Manakins, as well as a male Long-tailed and a male Orange-collared Manakin came down to bathe as did a fine male Chestnut-sided Warbler. A Scaly-throated Leaf-tosser put in a relatively brief appearance, but a pair of rare Long-tailed Woodcreepers were somewhat more obliging and showed very well indeed. Sadly our enjoyment of this spectacle was cut short by the appearance of two armed guards, keen to protect us from the apparent crepuscular dangers lurking in the forest, and they duly escorted us back to the bus!!

The following morning we stayed close to our hotel, admiring our first Rufous-tailed Jacamar, stunning Turquoise-browed Motmots, Greenish Elaenia and Rufous-capped Warblers. At the other end of the garden we found Band-tailed Barbthroat feeding at close range and a pair of impressive Pale-billed Woodpeckers tapped away. After a fine breakfast, we began our journey north, first pausing for Black-bellied Whistling Ducks, Least Grebe and Wood Storks. We then stopped off in the dry country a little further north, pausing for more stunning Turquoise-browed Motmots as we went. Here, we were searching for several specialities, and were immediately rewarded with amazing views of a pair of splendid Lesser Ground Cuckoos at close range. Other specialities such as Cinnamon Hummingbird, a Plain-capped Starthroat, Nutting's Flycatcher, White-lored Gnatcatcher, Banded Wren and Stripe-headed Sparrows were also seen well, and our first Ferruginous Pygmy Owl was also much admired.

Moving north, we stopped at various mangrove areas and estuaries. At the first, we found a stunning adult Franklin's Gull and the more numerous Laughing Gull, whilst in the mangroves here we found a confiding Panamanian Flycatcher. At the next stop, a particularly productive area of salt pans, we found some large flocks of



Two uncommon *Myiarchus* flycatchers: Panamanian Flycatcher (left) and Nutting's Flycatcher.

(American) Royal, Cabot's and Gull-billed Terns, numerous Black Skimmers and large numbers of shorebirds that held our attention for a while. Here we found a good selection of waders which included Marbled Godwit, Short-billed Dowitchers, (Western) Willet, Wilson's and Semipalmated Plovers, and Semipalmated, Least, Stilt and Western Sandpipers, many of which were coming into fine plumage. In the mangroves here, we found more confiding White-lored Gnatcatchers, and, for a lucky few, a pair of Rufous-necked Wood Rails!

After a fine lunch, our journey took us up the winding road to Monteverde, where we paused to admire a White-necked Puffbird and Orange-fronted Parakeets as we went. After negotiating the roadworks, we arrived in time to do a little birding in a patch of evergreen woodland close to our hotel. Here, we quickly found an entertaining group of Black-breasted Wood Quails running around on the forest floor in comical fashion, as well as our first Cabanis's Wrens and superb White-eared Ground Sparrows, but our primary target, Chiriqui Quail-Dove, was sadly only heard... One that we would need to try harder on! We then went on to a fabulous dinner and some book signing with my friend Robert Dean, the illustrator of the Costa Rica bird guide and a Monteverde resident!



Cracking White-eared Ground Sparrows were seen well around Monteverde.



Our time at Santa Elena was special for the amazing Three-wattled Bellbirds as well as more regular highland species such as Black-faced Solitaire and Ruddy Treerunner.



The following day, we packed an early breakfast, and headed up to the Santa Elena reserve for the morning. In somewhat windy conditions, the birding seemed a little slow, and we had to work for our birds, but ultimately we came away with some great rewards from the beautiful cloud forest! Pride of place went to the magnificent Three-wattled Bellbird which jumped from perch to perch emitting its bizarre calls right above us! Truly a bird that has to be seen to be believed! Other highlights during the morning included Black Guans (we even found one on a nest!), another Resplendent Quetzal and a tootling pair of Prong-billed Barbets. Slaty-backed Nightingale-Thrushes showed well, and we also had close-up sightings of a number of other highland species including Ruddy Treerunners, Black-faced Solitaire, White-throated Spadebill, Yellowish Flycatcher, Ochraceous Wren, Black-eared Warbler, numerous Common Bush Tanagers, the smart Yellow-thighed Finch and sneaky Lineated Foliage-gleaners.

After lunch, our bags, beer and other essentials were loaded on to Giovanni's quad-bike, and transported down to San Gerardo, our base for the next couple of nights. We followed suit and potted down in somewhat foggy conditions, notching up Blue-throated Toucanets and Golden-browed Chlorophonias as we went, before arriving at the lodge. The lodge is somewhat rustic, but this is made up for by the breathtaking scenery, the tranquillity and relaxing atmosphere, and the quality of the surrounding forest, though accessing the latter is not all straightforward as some of the trails are a little 'undulating'. The station hosts, Giovanni and Ivannia, looked after us well during our visit with Ivannia's tasty home cooking giving us the energy for all the walking we did up and down the hilly trails! The only downside is that the Bare-necked Umbrellabird, the star bird of the area, has become much harder to find these days, and like many before us, we failed to connect with this beast! Our first excursion out that evening did however yield one excellent bird, the skulking and localized Sooty-faced Finch, which showed very well at a stream down from the lodge.

Our efforts during our full day and morning at the site did yield some good birds. As well as the rare Sooty-faced Finch, some were lucky enough to see Blue-and-gold Tanager, though despite a lot of effort, the rest of us could not connect! An impressive Brown-billed Scythebill was much appreciated and other new species included "Orange-bellied" Trogon (nowadays considered to be merely a colour morph of Collared Trogon), a bold Grey-throated Leaf-tosser (just centimetres away at the entrance to its nest burrow), Red-faced Spinetails, Spotted Barbtails, the scarce Scaly-throated Foliage-gleaner, a small antswarm attended by Bicolored, Zeledon's and smart Spotted Antbirds, Plain Antvireo, a retiring Black-headed Antthrush walking quietly on the forest floor, a flock of restless Rufous-browed Tyrannulets, Rufous Mourner, sneaky Song Wren and Northern Nightingale-Wren (both seen well by some), more obliging Band-backed and Stripe-breasted Wrens, and attractive Black-headed Nightingale-Thrushes. From the clearings we watched colourful Scarlet-thighed Tanager and Crimson-collared Tanagers whilst the constant sound and antics of the Montezuma Oropendolas was never far away! Overhead, we were pleased to note American Swallow-tailed Kites and displaying Black Hawk-Eagles and Barred Hawks and at times we were able to admire the view from the station veranda, with its spectacular view of the Arenal Volcano, we as well as colourful Red-headed Barbets visiting the fruiting trees.



Swallow-tailed Kite, Barred Hawk (above) and Black Hawk-Eagle were all seen at San Gerardo.



Gorgeous Violet Sabrewings and Purple-throated Mountain-gems were highlights at the feeders at Monteverde.

After our adventures down at San Gerardo we returned to Santa Elena. The walk out really wasn't too bad, and we added Golden-bellied Flycatcher as we went. We then made our way to some hummingbird feeders close to the Monteverde Reserve, where we also enjoyed lunch. Here we enjoyed such goodies as Purple-throated Mountain-gems and a smart male Magenta-throated Woodstar, as well as numerous stunning Violet Sabrewings, Green-crowned Brilliants and Lesser Violetears. Sadly the habit of needing to put a mobile phone just centimetres from the hummers seems to be an increasing annoyance... the wonders of modern technology!! We then headed back down to Monteverde and had a second attempt for the sneaky Chiriqui Quail-Dove. We soon found Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush and several Ovenbirds but things were not looking too clever until we received a call from our trusty driver... A quick dash up the hill and a hunt around, and finally we laid eyes on the tricky Chiriqui Quail-Dove, and indeed got some great looks. It was now time to head back to our comfortable hotel and enjoy a hot shower and a good meal!!

Our early morning the following day proved to be a rub out as we tried unsuccessfully to locate the elusive Buff-fronted Quail-Dove. Still, we tried! We then returned to the lodge for breakfast and admired Blue-vented Hummingbirds and a Blue-throated Toucanet feeding in the lodge garden, and then headed out to explore the nearby Curicancha Reserve where the highlights included great views of another Three-wattled Bellbird and a verbena hedge which attracted both Stripe-tailed Hummingbird and the endemic Coppery-headed Emerald. We also notched up our first Chestnut-headed Oropendola, another Grey-throated Leaf-tosser and, just before leaving, our only White-naped Brushfinches of the trip.

As usual we had appointments to keep, and made our way to the excellent Hacienda Solimar. We arrived in time for lunch, and in the heat of the day, admired Canivet's Emeralds, Black-headed Trogons, comical White-throated Magpie-Jays and even sleepy Pacific Screech Owls right around the lodge! After a break, we went out across the impressive wetlands, admiring the huge flocks of Black-bellied Whistling Ducks mixed in with smaller numbers of Blue-winged Teal and Muscovy Ducks. The stately Jabirus were much admired, Bare-throated Tiger Herons were extremely common, the hordes of Roseate Spoonbills and Wood Storks were joined by Limpkins, whilst shorebirds included numerous Pectoral and Least Sandpipers and Lesser Yellowlegs, and we were also pleased to find lovely Double-striped Thick-knees. Diversion from the wetland birds was provided by numerous Snail Kites, Laughing Falcons and a Harris's Hawk. Pairs of Spot-breasted and Streak-backed Orioles showed well as did Plain-breasted Ground Doves, whilst the colourful displaying Red-winged Blackbirds were a sight to behold! At dusk, hundreds



Black-bellied Whistling Ducks, Double-striped Thick-knee and Jabiru... all at Hacienda Solimar.



of amazons flew into the trees to roost, and we enjoyed brilliant views of numerous Yellow-naped and White-fronted Amazons, noisily squawking in the trees above our heads! A large boa-constrictor seen along the road was also pretty impressive!

The following day we had a fairly obvious list of targets to look for in the drier forest areas around the finca. Scrub Euphonias greeted us, but soon we were following the eerie whistles of the elusive Thicket Tinamou. This we did for a while before one suddenly broke cover and paraded around in front of us. We could scarcely believe our eyes! With this toughie under the belt we continued looking for other targets, noting an obliging Northern Bentbill and a pair of Olive Sparrows, as well as Grey Hawk, more Turquoise-browed Motmots, Scissor-tailed and Brown-crested Flycatchers, a Bright-rumped Attila devouring a gecko, and a fine Grey-crowned Yellowthroat. At the final moment we also enjoyed spectacular views of a Collared Forest Falcon before heading back for breakfast and more looks at the super roosting Pacific Screech Owls.



Adult (right) and juvenile Pacific Screech Owls at Hacienda Solimar.



A quick look around after breakfast revealed little new before we had to say our thanks and goodbyes to our excellent hosts and head on once more. This time, our destination was the delightful Celeste Mountain Lodge, located on the forested slopes of Tenorio Volcano, one of two dormant Volcanoes in the northern section of the country that are of huge importance for a large number of migratory forest species. We arrived in time for



The cute Central American Pygmy Owl at Volcan Tenorio!

a lovely lunch, whilst watching Crimson-collared Tanagers and Black-cowled Orioles amongst others. By now the heavens had opened, a theme that was to continue for much of the tour! After lunch we went out in search of the rare Lovely Cotinga, but this proved to be a step too far, and we had not a sniff! Some persistence and cunning spotting did bring us excellent views of a much appreciated Central American Pygmy Owl, and other species included our first Black-cheeked Woodpeckers, comical Keel-billed Toucans, Black-faced Grosbeaks and Rufous-winged Tanager.

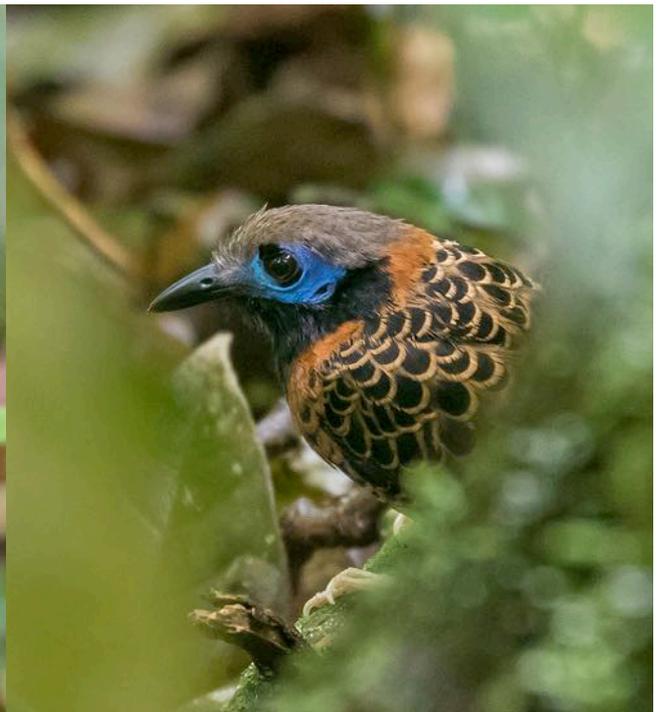
The following morning was spent birding the various trails around Heliconias Lodge. We lucked straight into a shy Black-eared Wood Quail, a tough bird on this tour, which eventually crossed the trail for us, but generally the birding was quite slow and hard work. The highlight of our walk around was finding a healthy sized antswarm, and although the attendant birds were shy, persistence paid off as we got some amazing views of stunning Ocellated Antbirds as well as confiding Spotted, Bicolored and Zeledon's Antbirds, both Ruddy and



Tody Motmot and Ruddy Woodcreeper from Heliconias Lodge.



Time around an antswarm is always time well spent... Here, Bicolored Antbird (above), Zeledon's Antbird (below left) and the shy but stunning Ocellated Antbird!



Northern Barred Woodcreepers and a Northern Schiffornis which put in a brief appearance. The Tody Motmots were generally conspicuous by their absence, but right at the eleventh hour my friend Henry pulled a pair out of a ravine and some sharp spotting led to views for all. As we left the forest, a stunning male Black-crested Coquette was a pleasant diversion, but the obscene amounts of pizza that followed are probably best forgotten! In the afternoon we returned to the Celeste side where another vigil for the cotinga was once again unsuccessful, despite the best efforts of the group! We did add lively Yellow Tyrannulets before making our way to Caño Negro, arriving after dark and in need of a beer and a good dinner!

The following day we made our way to a jetty where we immediately got some great looks at a singing Grey-headed Dove and an American Pygmy Kingfisher. We then embarked on a very enjoyable boat ride. The riverbanks were lined with goodies, and very soon we were enjoying great birds such as obliging Ru-



The under-appreciated Grey-headed Dove showed very well indeed!

fous-naped Wood Rails, the stunning Sungrebe and the extremely localized Nicaraguan Grackle. More Boat-billed Herons showed well, our only Northern Beardless Tyrannulet and Spot-breasted and Canebrake Wrens popped up, and we were amazed to see flocks of American White Pelicans totalling well in excess of 100 (and it was a write-in for the tour!!). We also explored areas of riverside marsh and wetlands. Here, the main prize was the ultra skulking Yellow-breasted Crake which was seen well on several occasions, even walking just in front of some of us, and we also flushed a Pinnated Bittern during our search. A pair of Collared Plovers and a



Sungrebe (this is a female) showed brilliantly during our boat trip at Hacienda Solimar.



We enjoyed numerous magical encounters with the recently split Rufous-naped Wood Rail (above) and Grey-necked Wood Rail.



Greater Yellowlegs were also added to our list, as was a Green-breasted Mango before breakfast back at the hotel. I think that qualifies as a decent pre-breakfast session! Whilst loading the bus, we got some great looks at Olive-throated Parakeets in the hotel garden

There were still spots of rain in the air, keeping the temperatures down, and as we headed on, the moist fields held Red-breasted Blackbirds, showy Olive-crowned Yellowthroats and the hulking near-endemic Nicaraguan Seedfinch. At another marsh we found three more brilliant cryptic Pinnated Bitterns, before heading to a lovely little reserve at La Fortuna. Here, things could not have been easier! A Black-and-white Owl peered down at us sleepily, sloths lazed in the canopy, Grey-headed Chachalacas, Mourning Warblers, Collared Aracarís and Yellow-throated Euphonias obliged, and a procession of rallids led to amazing views of the usually shy Uniform Crake as well as White-throated Crake and more Rufous-naped Wood Rails. We also enjoyed the incredible Red-eyed Tree Frog. We then made our way up to the stunning Arenal Observatory Lodge, our home for the next two nights, a little tired but content with a great day!



On what was an action-packed day, we enjoyed such diverse goodies as Pinnated Bittern, Nicaraguan Seedfinch and Black-and-white Owl!





The strangely-named Dull-mantled Antbird and this brilliant Northern Tamandua brightened up our pre-breakfast walk at Arenal!



By now, the intermittent rain was really kicking in, and our couple of mornings at Arenal were damp affairs as we dodged between the showers! Great Curassows, Crested Guans and White-nosed Coatis fed in front of the deck, colourful Golden-hooded Tanagers and honeycreepers fed on fruit, Brown-hooded Parrots perched up, and the verbena hedges in the lodge gardens attracted Bronze-tailed Plumeleeter, Violet-headed Hummingbirds, Brown Violetears and the localized Blue-throated Sapphire. We explored one of the trails pre-breakfast seeing Red-throated Ant-Tanagers and a fantastic Dull-mantled Antbird (complete with bright white mantle!!) before the rain returned. Perhaps the biggest surprise however was a gorgeous Northern Tamandua which appeared just before breakfast! We then headed down a little to a lower area where we soon found the much-wanted Keel-billed Motmot which, as usual, was paired with a Broad-billed Motmot. Very strange!! We also had two sessions down an excellent trail where we found a fine pair of Rufous-winged Woodpeckers, got some great looks at the rather strange Bare-crowned Antbird and attractive Black-throated Wren, and found both Black-headed Saltator and the hulking Great Antshrike. Our main prize however was a superb Thicket



Large gamebirds such as Great Curassow and Crested Guan are nowadays easy to see in Costa Rica... even in the rain!!



Antpitta which, after a bit of strategic planning, gave great views to all! In between the visits to the trail, we enjoyed a superb lunch, complete with accompanying Green-breasted Mangos. Later we explored around the lodge again, and here we found a mixed flock with the hoped for Streak-crowned Antwreos as well as a colourful Tawny-capped Euphonia.

The following morning we tried around the lodge again, but were again thwarted by the weather! Nevertheless, we did find a few birds... Mixed flocks, led by noisy Carmiol's Tanagers, held Russet Antshrike and more

Streak-crowned Antvireos, a confiding Tawny-throated Leaf-tosser showed well to all and, of greatest surprise, a Violaceous Quail-Dove flushed up off the trail and perched in view – quite a rarity in Costa Rica and a new bird for Birdquest in Costa Rica! When the heavens opened yet again, we took it as a hint, packed up and got on our way! Moving on, we stopped at a local hummingbird garden on the foothills of Vólcan Poás, and here, as well as taking another fine lunch, we were delighted to find several striking Black-bellied Hummingbirds, some smart Green Thorntails and more Coppery-headed Emeralds. Moving ever onward we then made our way to the famous reserve OTS La Selva, a biologist's paradise, and one of the leading tropical research facilities in the world, which also happens to be extremely birdy. Our first late afternoon we explored just close to the lodge, finally enjoying fantastic views of magnificent Great Green Macaws in the pasture close to our hotel after a bit of a wait. We also found a pair of breeding Bat Falcons here, and after dinner, some of us got to see our first Vermiculated Screech Owl of the tour, a richly dark individual!



Delightful Black-bellied Hummingbirds and Coppery-headed Emeralds were seen well at Cataratas del Toro.

The following day we had the full day to explore around La Selva, though ultimately this proved to be a rather soggy affair thanks to the near constant rain! Consequently the birding was a little tough, but we still managed a good number of new species. Perhaps most appreciated was the fine Sunbittern pottering along the trail, but other highlights included the hulking Great Tinamou, a perched King Vulture, the smart Chestnut-coloured Woodpecker, Purple-crowned Fairy, tiny Pied Puffbirds, Rufous Motmots, Black-crowned Antshrike, tiny Black-capped Pygmy Tyrants, a party of vocal Purple-throated Fruitcrows, gorgeous displaying White-collared Manakins popping at their lek, smart Olive-backed Euphonias, colourful Shiny Honeycreepers, Plain Tanager and noisy Dusky-faced Tanagers. We also came across a roosting Vermiculated Screech Owl and a smart yellow Eyelash Viper, but failed to set eyes upon the elusive calling Slaty-breasted Tinamou which called occasionally in the rain! At dusk, the weather dried up a little, and we were able to get some fine views of Green Ibis and Short-tailed Nighthawk from the bridge.

We also made a day excursion to Braulio Carrillo National Park and some adjacent areas. Again the wet conditions were not helpful!! We began at a hummingbird garden where we enjoyed wonderful Snowcaps alongside more superb Black-crested Coquettes. We then investigated a trail where we were both surprised and delighted to find a fine male Yellow-eared Toucanet! A pair of Olive-backed Quail-Doves wandered across a path, and we eventually found some mixed flocks which held a few fast-moving Emerald and Black-and-yellow



Snowcap and Black-crested Coquettes vied for our attention, as did Crested and Spectacled Owls, both seen superbly at daytime roosts.



Tanagers as well as some easier-to-see Tawny-crested Tanagers, though sadly the hoped for trogons failed to materialize! After a large lunch, we spent some time with an excellent local guide who showed us roosting Spectacled and stunning Crested Owls, a smart Fasciated Tiger Heron, a Sunbittern at a nest with two small chicks and even some amazing Honduran White Bats. We also enjoyed great views of White-crowned Parrots, Black-throated Trogon (including one on a nest in a stump) and the scarce White-ringed Flycatcher.

A final morning at La Selva was once again wet, and although Blue-chested Hummingbird was added, we found little else of interest other than a place to shelter!! Moving on, the weather dried up for a while, and we made another attempt in Braulio Carillo National Park, enjoying more Snowcaps, coquettes, canopy flocks

and spider monkeys, as well as a Cinnamon Woodpecker, but not the birds we were hoping for. Lunch in San Jose was made more fun by the antics of Liverpool FC on the television, and we then moved on to Cerro de la Muerte, in the fog and rain. This did not deter the Fiery-throated and Talamanca Hummingbirds that entertained us at the lodge before our early dinner. Miraculously, the weather lifted for our nightbirding, but try as we could, we could not find the hoped-for Unspotted Saw-whet Owl. We heard one, and we saw a Dusky Nightjar, but ultimately it was a long and slightly disappointing night, especially as we were not back until midnight!

The following morning was a different kettle of fish! Fine weather and a superb pre-breakfast stroll yielded many of our highland targets as new birds came thick and fast. Pride of place went to the rare Ochraceous Pewee, the superb Wrenthrush (or Zeledonia), and a feisty Costa Rican Pygmy Owl that posed in the scope. Our first Yellow-winged Vireos showed well, Black-capped Flycatchers flicked along the hedges and other good species included Black-and-yellow Phainoptilas, Long-tailed Silkies, Barred Becard, the smart Buffy Tuftedcheek, the localized Streak-breasted Treehunter and smart Collared Whitestarts for starters! After breakfast



Highland birds included the stunning Long-tailed Silky Flycatcher, Black-and-yellow Phainoptila and Collared Whitestart.





Silvery-throated Jay and Costa Rican Pygmy Owl... two of the tougher highland specialties.

we explored another fine area of oak forest. Of course by now, most of the birds were familiar to us, but we did manage to track down our main target, the superb Silvery-throated Jay (an increasingly difficult endemic) which showed well and at length. We paused along the way to check other areas, finding more Volcano Juncos, and made our way on to San Isidro. Here, we paused in the most unlikely of birding spots in San Isidro where, amazingly, we quickly found a superb male Turquoise Cotinga (a welcome change in our cotinga luck!) which we enjoyed in the scope for some time. Having sated ourselves on this beauty we made our way to a patch of flowering eucalypt trees. A few hummers were present, including the hoped-for Snowy-bellied Hummingbird, and we also found a comical pair of Grey-necked Wood Rails and our first handsome Fiery-billed Aracaris. We arrived at the lovely Talari Lodge just in time for a look over the river, finding our first Olivaceous Piculet.

Next morning we started off with some very enjoyable early morning birding at Talari, and at breakfast, we enjoyed the numerous colourful Cherrie's Tanagers and other species coming to the bananas. We then made



Scaly-breasted Hummingbird and Tawny-winged Woodcreeper were easy at Los Cusingos.

our way to Los Cusingos, the home of the late ornithological legend, Dr. Alexander Skutch, taking in Isthmian Wren as we went. The beautiful gardens and a patch of forest have been preserved, and we spent the morning exploring these. In the gardens, we had great views of Scaly-breasted Hummingbird, Speckled Tanagers and Spot-crowned Euphonias, whilst on the trails we found the uncommon Yellow-bellied Tyrannulet, Ruddy-tailed Flycatcher, a noisy Rufous Piha, and several fine Tawny-winged Woodcreepers, one of which was attending an antswarm along with Bicoloured Antbirds and noisy Grey-headed Tanagers! The rest of the afternoon was spent making the long and very wet drive to Esquinas Rainforest Lodge. On arrival we birded an open area briefly, finding our first Costa Rican Swifts as well as Pale-breasted Spinetail, Scrub Greenlet and the very local (in Costa Rica) Rusty-margined Flycatcher. A post dinner excursion was relatively quiet, but did yield a fine Common Potoo.

We had the following morning to explore the rather hot and humid forests that surround the Esquinas Rainforest Lodge. We began on the trails which are home to a number of interesting species, and the main target, the localized Black-cheeked Ant Tanager, although shy at first, did not prove too difficult to find. Also in the forest we were pleased to find Black-striped Woodcreeper and an unusually calm Western Woodhaunter. Gorgeous Orange-collared Manakins glowed from the undergrowth, Charming Hummingbirds attended the flowers, a fine pair of Golden-naped Woodpeckers attended their nest, and a mixed flock held a fabulous pair of White-throated Shrike-Tanagers and Eye-ringed Flatbills as well as a neck-breaking pair of Green Shrike-Vireos which we eventually all saw. Most unusual was a pair of Grey-necked Wood-Rails attending the banana feeders!! We tried a nearby area in the afternoon, but once again, torrential rain thwarted us! We did find some hummers, including what was presumably a male Veraguan Mango, but the views were only ever brief. Another foray that evening again brought us a Common Potoo, as well as a surprising sighting of Kinkajou!



Black-cheeked Ant-Tanager and Orange-collared Manakin were two of the highlights at Esquinas Lodge.

The following morning, we set off for Rincon in the early morning, way before dawn, in order to seek out Yellow-billed Cotinga, one of the most localized of the south Pacific slope regional endemics, presently classified as endangered. After a tense wait, this year we were again in luck with the “white bird”. After some good but distant scope views, they started to appear nearer by, and we gained some great views of the 4+ birds present. We also found another Turquoise Cotinga adjacent to one of them! Great stuff! Here we also watched Mangrove Swallows, a fine Yellow-billed Cacique and our first Grey-lined Hawk. We then moved to a nearby beach where we soon located the endemic Mangrove Hummingbird, another endangered species, several of which showed very well indeed, and nearby we found a our only Scarlet-rumped Caciques of the tour!



Immature male (above left) and adult male Yellow-billed Cotingas; below, alongside a Turquoise Cotinga!

Onwards ever onwards, we then continued our journey, stopping for a quick look and lunch around Ciudad Nielly where Lesser Yellow-headed Vultures quartered the fields. We then drove back into the hills for a pleasant afternoon excursion around San Vito. Here, birding around some marshes, we enjoyed amazing views of Swallow-tailed Kites, our first Scaled Pigeons, and, most importantly, a fine pair of Chiriqui Yellowthroats (split from Masked), which performed superbly (after a bit of a search), at one of its few accessible sites in Costa Rica. Afterwards, we had success in finding another important southern speciality, the scarce Costa Rican Brush Finch (split from Stripe-headed) which also granted us excellent views, and in the same area we also



The localized Chiriqui Yellowthroat and the scarce Costa Rican Brushfinch in San Vito.



Marbled Woodquails gave terrific views again this year!

found a fine Slaty Spinetail before driving the short distance to our accommodation at Las Cruces Field Station. The late afternoon excursion never materialized though... it poured down again!! I did however manage to find a White-tailed Emerald between the deluges!!

We spent the next morning walking around the Wilson Botanical Gardens. Early morning we located a calling Barred Forest Falcon before breakfast, and around the lodge we watched Silver-throated Tanagers, Thick-billed Euphonias and other frugivores attending the bananas. Around the gardens, we were delighted to find a showy female White-crested Coquette and a fine male Garden Emerald before heading to the trails. Here, our major success was gaining excellent views of a trio of smart Marbled Wood Quails at point blank range, our fourth wood quail of the trip!! We also finally found an obliging Scale-crested Pygmy Tyrants uttering their distinctive calls, and several White-throated Thrushes and Red-crowned Ant-Tanagers attending an antswarm. Unfortunately the Ruddy Foliage-gleaner refused to come out though! We then continued our journey back towards Cerro de la Muerte, stopping at the highest altitude to look in the bamboo. Here we found numerous Slaty Flowerpiercers, and, for one lucky member of the group, a Peg-billed Finch. We then made our way down to the wonderful Savegre Lodge where, guess what... it began raining! Around the gardens, gorgeous Grey-tailed Mountain-gems, Flame-coloured Tanagers and Acorn Woodpeckers were present, and, undeterred, a few of us went out for a quick look round, and soon found Spotted Wood Quails and the localized Dark Pewee!



Slaty Flowerpiercers were seen in good numbers.



The delightful Spangle-cheeked Tanager showed superbly at Savegre!

Early the following morning, we again explored close to our hotel. The lovely gardens held numerous birds including smart Ruddy-capped Nightingale-Thrushes and nearby, we soon found a smart and much-wanted Buff-fronted Quail-Dove. Nearby, gorgeous Spotted Wood Quails were found, looking after their chicks and we enjoyed remarkably intimate views of these stunning birds, that were frequently calling and displaying their yellow crests! Nearby, a pair of Dark Pewees posed nicely, Scintillant Hummingbirds were seen and some gorgeous Spangle-cheeked Tanagers showed well at eye level. And all of this before breakfast! After breakfast, we were driven up to the lodge's impressive Los Robles forest reserve, named for the beautiful oak there. Here we were birding amidst the oak trees festooned with moss and bromeliads, where Black-faced Solitaires sang their beautiful, fluty and ethereal songs. We then spent the rest of the morning walking slowly back down to the



Yellow-winged Vireo and Sulphur-winged Parakeet were both seen very well around Savegre Lodge.



Superb Grey-tailed (or White-throated) Mountaingems were frequent around Savegre.

hotel, following a lovely trail along a small stream, successfully tracking down an initially skulky Silvery-fronted Tapaculo. Mixed flocks held more Spangle-cheeked Tanagers and other old friends as well as our only Brown-capped Vireos and Spot-crowned Woodcreepers of the trip. Having had various brief views of parakeets, we were delighted to find an obliging flock of fruit-thieving Sulphur-winged Parakeets which showed brilliantly... just as the heavens opened once more!!

Moving on, our next target was the rare and localized Cabanis's Ground Sparrow, a Costa Rica endemic (having being split from Prevost's Ground Sparrow). Sadly, habitat degradation and rain were not on our side, and after an hour we were almost ready to give up when one appeared right next to me at a rather inopportune moment! Fortunately it hung around, and relieved (in more than one sense!!), we all gained some great views of this smart species! Whilst looking we also found Greyish Saltators and more Garden Emeralds. We then continued our journey to the foothills of the Talamanca Mountains at Rancho Naturalista where we enjoyed our first of several fine meals at this lovely lodge. That evening, a Nine-banded Armadillo decided to come and investigate the lawn!!



The rare and localized endemic Cabanis's Ground Sparrow showed at the last minute!

Our pre-dawn start the next morning saw us enjoying coffee and snacks on the veranda before making our way into the forest with our excellent local guide, Harry. Our initial focus was on the localized near-endemic Tawny-chested Flycatcher, and it didn't take us too long to secure great views of this smart bird. A pair of Bicolored Hawks were a bonus, a Barred Forest Falcon was also seen and we then turned our attention to manakins, and before too long we had bagged great views of both White-ruffed and White-crowned Manakins. Our focus then turned to the sneaky Purplish-backed Quail-Doves which after a brief search showed very well, and we also found Slaty-capped Flycatcher, and, later in the day in the same areas, Checker-throated Antwren and Olivaceous Woodcreeper. After breakfast, Harry took us to a couple of nearby birding spots. At the first we looked for White-throated Flycatcher, which soon gave good views in the scope, and nearby, along the river we gained some amazing views of another Sunbittern, even wing-stretching, and a pair of Torrent Tyrannulets. We ended the day at the hummingbird pools, admiring the colours of the dipping Snowcaps, Crowned Wood-nymphs and others.

We explored the lower slopes of Cerro Silencio on the final morning, a site with a lot of potential, but one that is not easy to explore, especially in the short time we had. Another Tawny-throated Leaf-tosser, some smart Emerald Tanagers and a variety of other by now familiar species, including another Sunbittern on the nest, were seen, but it was now time to return for one final lavish breakfast! We then showered, packed and made our way back towards San José, and the relatively short drive to the airport. Time to relax and reflect back on what had been another amazing trip around this brilliant country!



The beautiful Sunbittern was once again a highlight of the trip!



It's not often you get a view like this of the impressive Collared Forest Falcon!

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

Species marked with the diamond symbol (◊) are either endemic to the country or local region or considered 'special' birds for some other reason (e.g. it is only seen on one or two Birdquest tours; it is difficult to see across all or most of its range; the local form is endemic or restricted-range and may in future be treated as a full species).

Species which were heard but not seen are indicated by the symbol (H).

Species which were not personally recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (NL).

Species which were only recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (LO).

Conservation threat categories and information are taken from *Threatened Birds of the World*, BirdLife International's magnificent book on the sad status of the rarest 10% of the world's avifauna, and updates on the BirdLife website: <http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/home>

(EW) = Extinct in the wild, **(CR)** = Critically Endangered, **(EN)** = Endangered, **(VU)** = Vulnerable, **(NT)** = Near Threatened, **(DD)** = Data Deficient.

For polytypic species, the subspecies seen on the tour, where known, is placed in parentheses at the end of the species comment. Generally, species listed with trinomials are not currently split by the IOC.

The species names and taxonomy used in the report mostly follows Gill, F & D Donsker (Eds). **2018. IOC World Bird List (v 8.1)**. This list is updated twice annually and is available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>. Please note, this was the current version when the report checklist was created. Some alternative names are given in parentheses.

All of our checklists are powered by our partner iGoTerra (www.igoterra.com) who provide web and mobile applications for bird and wildlife enthusiasts and businesses. Their suite of services cover observations, rankings, lists, photos and trip management tools.



We were fortunate to get some amazing views of the often retiring Thicket Tinamou! Black-eared Woodquail was a great surprise, this picture, of the same bird, was taken just after the tour.



- Great Tinamou** *Tinamus major* (NT) Two forms recorded: *castaneiceps* heard at Carara; *fuscipennis* seen well at La Selva.
- Highland Tinamou** ◊ *Nothocercus bonapartei* (H) A few heard, first at the Santa Elena Reserve, but none close by [*frantzii*].
- Thicket Tinamou** ◊ *Crypturellus cinnamomeus* Brilliant views of one in the dry forest near Hacienda Solimar [*praepes*].
- Slaty-breasted Tinamou** ◊ *Crypturellus boucardi* (H) Only heard twice at La Selva where we were hampered by rain [*costaricensis*].
- Black-bellied Whistling Duck** *Dendrocygna autumnalis* Plenty, but 1000s at Hacienda Solimar was impressive [*fulgens*].
- Muscovy Duck** *Cairina moschata* First at Carara, but best views and highest numbers at Hacienda Solimar.
- Blue-winged Teal** *Anas discors* c40 at Hacienda Solimar and a few others.
- Grey-headed Chachalaca** ◊ *Ortalis cinereiceps* Several seen well, the first at our hotel in Moneverde.
- Crested Guan** *Penelope purpurascens* Many seen well, the first at our hotel at Carara [*aequatorialis*].
- Black Guan** ◊ *Chamaepetes unicolor* (NT) A few seen well, first at Santa Elena where we even saw one on the nest.
- Great Curassow** ◊ *Crax rubra* (VU) Several seen well and many were tame! First noted at Carara this year [nominate].

Buffy-crowned Wood Partridge ◇ *Dendrortyx leucophrys* Brilliant views at Vólcan Irázu [*hypospodius*].
Marbled Wood Quail *Odontophorus gujanensis* (NT) Brilliant views of a trio at the Wilson Botanical Gardens [*castigatus*].
Black-eared Wood Quail ◇ *Odontophorus melanotis* One at Heliconias Lodge was a surprise [nominated].
Black-breasted Wood Quail ◇ *Odontophorus leucolaemus* Stunning views of a couple of groups at Monteverde.
Spotted Wood Quail ◇ *Odontophorus guttatus* Brilliant views of a couple of groups, and chicks, near to Savegre Lodge.
Least Grebe *Tachybaptus dominicus* Just one seen on a roadside pool near to Carara [*brachypterus*].
Wood Stork *Mycteria americana* Plenty seen, first near to Carara..
Jabiru *Jabiru mycteria* Three seen well at Hacienda Solimar. Impressive!
Green Ibis *Mesembrinibis cayennensis* Great views from the bridge at La Selva.
American White Ibis *Eudocimus albus* Seen in small numbers at several wetlands [nominated].
Roseate Spoonbill *Platalea ajaja* Small numbers at several wetlands, the first on the boat trip at Tarcoles.
Fasciated Tiger Heron *Tigrisoma fasciatum* One on a river near to La Union was a bonus [*salmonii*].
Bare-throated Tiger Heron *Tigrisoma mexicanum* Plenty of this attractive heron. Best numbers at Hacienda Solimar.
Boat-billed Heron *Cochlearius cochlearius* Great views on the boat at Tarcoles and at Caño Negro [*panamensis*].



Some heron highlights! Fasciated Tiger Heron and Boat-billed heron above, and the smart Bare-throated Tiger Heron.





Green Herons can be extremely photogenic at times!

- Pinnated Bittern** *Botaurus pinnatus* One flushed at Cano Negro, then superb views of three, near Los Chiles. [nominate].
Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* Just a handful seen, the first at Hacienda Solimar [*hoactli*].
Yellow-crowned Night Heron *Nyctanassa violacea* (NL) Seen by some on the boat trip at Tarcoles [nominate].
Green Heron *Butorides virescens* Largest numbers at Hacienda Solimar and Caño Negro [nominate].
Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* Common and widespread.
Great Blue Heron *Ardea herodias* Just a few seen, with c6 at Hacienda Solimar the biggest count [nominate].
Great Egret *Ardea alba* Widespread in small numbers in wetlands [*egretta* = American G E].



A young Bare-throated Tiger Heron and a fine Anhinga along the river at Cano Negro.

Tricolored Heron *Egretta tricolor* A few seen, first on the boat trip at Tarcoles [*ruficollis*].

Little Blue Heron *Egretta caerulea* A few seen, first on the boat trip at Tarcoles.

Snowy Egret *Egretta thula* Small numbers seen at several wetlands [nominate].

American White Pelican *Pelecanus erythrorhynchos* Two flocks, totalling well over 150, were a surprise write-in!

Brown Pelican *Pelecanus occidentalis* Seen on the Tarcoles boat trip and along the coast further north.

Magnificent Frigatebird *Fregata magnificens* Seen on the Tarcoles boat trip and along the coast further north.

Neotropic Cormorant *Phalacrocorax brasilianus* Seen on the Tarcoles boat trip and in the Cano Negro area. [nominate].

Anhinga *Anhinga anhinga* Small numbers, first on the Tarcoles boat trip. [*leucogaster*].

Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura* Common and widespread.

Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture *Cathartes burrovianus* Seen at Media Queso, and in the south near Ciudad Niely. [nominate].

Black Vulture *Coragyps atratus* Common and widespread.

King Vulture *Sarcoramphus papa* Just one seen perched in the canopy at La Selva.

Western Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* Small numbers seen at a few sites, the first on the Tarcoles boat trip [*carolinensis*].

White-tailed Kite *Elanus leucurus* A few seen well during the journeys, the first good views near to Cano Negro.

Grey-headed Kite *Leptodon cayanensis* (H) One heard at Hacienda Solimar, but it did not respond. [nominate].

Swallow-tailed Kite *Elanoides forficatus* Common and widespread with many great views.

Black Hawk-Eagle *Spizaetus tyrannus* An rather tatty adult seen circling at San Gerardo [*serus*].

Ornate Hawk-Eagle *Spizaetus ornatus* (H) (NT) Clearly heard on Cerro de la Muerte but sadly not visible. [*vicarius*].

Double-toothed Kite *Harpagus bidentatus* A few seen, the first in the Wilson Botanical Gardens [*fasciatus*].

Sharp-shinned Hawk *Accipiter striatus* One seen mobbing the Black Hawk Eagle at San Gerardo [*velox*].

Bicolored Hawk *Accipiter bicolor* Great views of a pair perched at Rancho Naturalista [nominate].

Mississippi Kite *Ictinia mississippiensis* Just a handful of migrants seen in the La Selva area.

Plumbeous Kite *Ictinia plumbea* A few on the Tarcoles Boat Trip were the only ones.

Snail Kite *Rostrhamus sociabilis* Several seen at the Hacienda Solimar [nominate].



Red-tailed Hawk and Snail Kite - two common birds which showed well.

Common Black Hawk ◇ *Buteogallus anthracinus* A handful seen; first on the Tarcoles boat trip [*bangsi* = Mangrove B H]

Barred Hawk *Morphnarchus princeps* Good views of pairs circling at San Gerrardo and near to Rancho Naturalista.

Roadside Hawk *Rupornis magnirostris* Two forms: *griseocauda* on the Caribbean slope *petulans* on the Pacific slope.

Harris's Hawk *Parabuteo unicinctus* One seen well at Hacienda Solimar [*harris*].

White Hawk *Pseudastur albicollis* Just a couple seen, one on Vólcan Tenorio and another at Arenal [*costaricensis*].

Grey Hawk *Buteo plagiatus* Just a few seen, the first at Hacienda Solimar.

Grey-lined Hawk *Buteo nitidus* Good views of an immature from the Rincon Bridge [*blakei*].

Broad-winged Hawk *Buteo platypterus* Just a handful of migrants seen [nominate].



Another view of the fantastic Sungrebe, and an amazingly confiding Uniform Crake!



- Zone-tailed Hawk** *Buteo albonotatus* Just one of these Turkey Vulture mimics seen well near to Ciudad Niely.
- Red-tailed Hawk** *Buteo jamaicensis* A few seen with good views on Vólcan Irázu [*costaricensis*].
- Sunbittern** *Eurypyga helias* Brilliant views at La Selva, on the nest at La Union, and near Rancho Naturalista [*major*].
- Sungrebe** *Heliornis fulica* Superb views of a stunning female on the boat trip at Cano Negro.
- White-throated Crake** *Laterallus albigularis* See note.
- Rufous-necked Wood Rail** *Aramides axillaris* A pair seen well at Punta Morales, but sadly they walked off quickly.
- Grey-necked Wood Rail** *Aramides cajaneus* Excellent views in San Isidro and Esquinas [nominated].
- Rufous-naped Wood Rail** ◊ *Aramides albiventris* Great views on the Cano Negro boat trip and at La Fortuna [*plumbeicollis*].
- Uniform Crake** ◊ *Amaurolimnas concolor* Brilliant views of one or two near to La Fortuna [*guatemalensis*].
- Yellow-breasted Crake** ◊ *Porzana flaviventer* At least three seen well on the Caño Negro boat trip [*woodi*].
- Purple Gallinule** *Porphyrio martinica* Seen at a few sites, the first at Hacienda Solimar.
- Common Gallinule** *Gallinula galeata* A pair at San Vito - an uncommon sight on this tour [*cachinnans*].
- Limpkin** *Aramus guarauna* A few seen at Hacienda Solimar, and on the Caño Negro boat trip [*dolosus*].
- Double-striped Thick-Knee** *Burhinus bistriatus* Excellent views of a few around Hacienda Solimar [nominated].



Exploring the wetlands was fun! Solitary Sandpiper, Spectacled Caiman and Southern Lapwing, a recent colonist!



- Black-necked Stilt** *Himantopus mexicanus* Largest numbers between Carara and Hacienda Solimar [nominate].
- Southern Lapwing** *Vanellus chilensis* Reasonably common these days. First seen at Hacienda Solimar [*cayennensis*].
- Grey Plover (Black-bellied P)** *Pluvialis squatarola* First on the Tarcoles boat trip, more at Punta Morales.
- Semipalmated Plover** *Charadrius semipalmatus* Greatest numbers were on the salt pans at Punta Morales.
- Wilson's Plover** *Charadrius wilsonia* A few at Tarcoles and about 12 on the salt pans at Punta Morales [*beldingii*].
- Collared Plover** *Charadrius collaris* At least two seen in open grassy areas on the boat trip at Caño Negro.
- Northern Jacana** *Jacana spinosa* Seen at a number of sites. Greatest numbers during the boat trip at Caño Negro.
- Whimbrel (Hudsonian W)** *Numenius [phaeopus] hudsonicus* Seen at a number of sites, the first at Tarcoles.
- Marbled Godwit** *Limosa fedoa* c30 on the salt pans at Punta Morales [*fedoa*].
- Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres* Just a few on the Tarcoles boat trip [*morinella*].
- Stilt Sandpiper** *Calidris himantopus* c5 on the pans at Punta Morales, a couple in breeding plumage.

Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla* Seen at Punta Morales, Hacienda Solimar and during the Cano Negro boat trip.

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos* Best views were at Hacienda Solimar where good numbers were present.

Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla* (NT) c25 on the salt pans at Punta Morales.

Western Sandpiper *Calidris mauri* A few seen well, especially on the salt pans at Punta Morales.

Short-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus griseus* First at Tarcoles, and c30 on the salt pans at Punta Morales.

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius* Small numbers at a number of sites, some coming into summer plumage.

Solitary Sandpiper *Tringa solitaria* Best was the confiding bird at Cano Negro.

Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes* Especially common at Hacienda Solimar.

Willet (Western W) *Tringa [semipalmata] inornata* Seen at a few sites, the first on the Tarcoles boat trip.

Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca* One seen well during the Cano Negro boat trip.

Black Skimmer *Rynchops niger* c40 on the salt pans at Punta Morales [nominate].

Laughing Gull *Leucophaeus atricilla* Plenty along the coast north of Carara [*megalopterus*].

Franklin's Gull *Leucophaeus pipixcan* A lovely summer plumaged adult on the estuary at Caldera.

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* A few on the salt pans at Punta Morales [*nilotica-group*].

Royal Tern (American R T) *Thalasseus [maximus] maximus* Common along the coast north of Carara.

Cabot's Tern *Thalasseus acutiflavus* A few between Carara and Hacienda Solimar, and on the Osa Peninsula. [nominate].

Rock Dove (Feral) *Columba livia 'feral'* (introduced) Pleasingly not too common!

Scaled Pigeon *Patagioenas speciosa* Good views of a couple in the San Vito area were the only ones.

Band-tailed Pigeon *Patagioenas fasciata* Seen at a few upland sites, the first at Vólcan Irazú [*crissalis*].

Pale-vented Pigeon *Patagioenas cayennensis* A few in the lowlands, the first at Cano Negro [*pallidicrissa*].

Red-billed Pigeon *Patagioenas flavirostris* Small numbers at many sites, the first on the way to Carara NP.

Ruddy Pigeon *Patagioenas subvinacea* (NT) A few heard and seen well at San Gerardo [nominate].

Short-billed Pigeon ♦ *Patagioenas nigrirostris* Many heard and a few seen well, the first at San Gerardo.

Inca Dove *Columbina inca* Especially common north of Carara and around Hacienda Solimar.

Common Ground Dove *Columbina passerina* Small numbers, mostly between Carara and Hacienda Solimar [*neglecta*].

Plain-breasted Ground Dove *Columbina minuta* A few seen well at Hacienda Solimar [*elaeodes*].

Ruddy Ground Dove *Columbina talpacoti* The commonest and most widespread of the ground doves [*rufipennis*].

Blue Ground Dove *Claravis pretiosa* A handful seen, the first on the Cano Negro boat trip.

Ruddy Quail-Dove *Geotrygon montana* Just one seen, flushed off the trail in Carara NP [nominate].

Violaceous Quail-Dove ♦ *Geotrygon violacea* One seen well by some of us at Arenal was asurprise! [*albiventer*].

Olive-backed Quail-Dove ♦ *Leptotrygon veraguensis* A pair seen at close range briefly in Braulio Carillo NP.

White-tipped Dove *Leptotila verreauxi* Fairly common and widespread [nominate].

Grey-headed Dove ♦ *Leptotila plumbeiceps* c3, including uperb views of a singing bird at Caño Negro [nominate].

Grey-chested Dove ♦ *Leptotila cassinii* Two forms: *cerviniventris* in the Caribbean *rufinucha* on the Pacific side.

Buff-fronted Quail-Dove ♦ *Zentrygon costaricensis* Great views near to Savegre Lodge on Cerro de la Muerte.

Purplish-backed Quail-Dove ♦ *Zentrygon lawrencii* Superb views at Rancho Naturalista and heard at San Gerardo..



The secretive Purplish-backed Quail-Dove was teased into view at Rancho Naturalista.

Chiriqui Quail-Dove ◊ *Zentrygon chiriquensis* Great views of one at the Santuario Ecologica at Monteverde.
Mourning Dove *Zenaida macroura* Several seen on the slopes of the Vólcan Irázu [*carolinensis*-group].
White-winged Dove *Zenaida asiatica* Seen in small numbers at several sites, first on the way to Carara [*australis*].
Smooth-billed Ani *Crotophaga ani* Only seen in the southeast, especially in the Esquinas Rainforest Lodge area.
Groove-billed Ani *Crotophaga sulcirostris* Fairly common and widespread.
Striped Cuckoo *Tapera naevia* A few heard and seen by some at the hotel in Carara.
Lesser Ground Cuckoo ◊ *Morococcyx erythropygus* Brilliant views of a stunning pair north of Carara.



Two quite different but much appreciated birds! Lesser Ground Cuckoo and Common Potoo.

Squirrel Cuckoo *Piaya cayana* Small numbers at several sites, the first at Carara [*thermophila*].
Yellow-billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus americanus* A migrant seen along the river at Cano Negro.
Pacific Screech Owl ◊ *Megascops cooperi* A family of 3 gave brilliant views by the lodge at Hacienda Solimar.
Tropical Screech Owl *Megascops choliba* (H) Heard at Talari Lodge and Esquinas Rainforest Lodge [*luctisonus*].
Bare-shanked Screech Owl ◊ *Megascops clarkii* Brilliant views of a two at Vólcan Irázu; the very first bird of the tour.
Vermiculated Screech Owl ◊ *Megascops vermiculatus* Superb views at La Selva.
Mottled Owl *Strix virgata centralis* (H) Heard at Las Cruces and Rancho Naturalista [*centralis*].
Black-and-white Owl *Strix nigrolineata* Excellent views of one at a day roost at the Bogarind Trail in La Fortuna.
Crested Owl *Lophotrix cristata* Great scope views of a roosting pair near to Flores [*stricklandi*].
Spectacled Owl *Pulsatrix perspicillata* Great views of a roosting pair near to Flores [*saturata*].
Costa Rican Pygmy Owl ◊ *Glaucidium costaricanum* Excellent views of one on Cerro de la Muerte.
Central American Pygmy Owl ◊ *Glaucidium griseiceps* Superb views of one near to Celeste Mountain Lodge.



Two very different Vermiculated Screech Owls from La Selva and one of many Pauraques seen well.



- Ferruginous Pygmy Owl *Glaucidium brasilianum*** Four seen, the first 2 on the Guacalillo Road north of Carara. [ridgwayi].
- Unspotted Saw-whet Owl** ♦ *Aegolius ridgwayi* (H) Despite our best efforts, sadly only heard on Cerro de la Muerte.
- Common Potoo *Nyctibius griseus*** Excellent views of one near to Esquinas Rainforest Lodge [panamensis].
- Lesser Nighthawk *Chordeiles acutipennis*** Plenty seen on the Tarcoles boat trip, including perched roosting birds.
- Short-tailed Nighthawk *Lurocalis semitorquatus*** Seen well along the river at La Selva [stonei].
- Pauraque *Nyctidromus albicollis*** Many seen well, the first on the road on the way to Heliconias Lodge [nominate].
- Dusky Nightjar** ♦ *Antrostomus saturatus* Brilliant views at Vólcan Irázu and again at Cerro de la Muerte.
- [Spot-fronted Swift** ♦ *Cypseloides cherriei* A few probables seen at La Selva and at Flores].
- Chestnut-collared Swift *Streptoprocne rutila*** First seen well near to Flores [brunnitorques].
- White-collared Swift *Streptoprocne zonaris*** Seen at many sites through the tour [bouchellii].
- Costa Rican Swift** ♦ *Chaetura fumosa* Excellent views of a few, the first near to Esquinas Rainforest Lodge.
- Grey-rumped Swift *Chaetura cinereiventris*** A few seen well at La Selva. [phaeopygos].
- Vaux's Swift *Chaetura vauxi*** Noted along the road to the Tenorio Volcano [richmondii].
- Lesser Swallow-tailed Swift *Panyptila cayennensis*** Seen at Talari Lodge and near Esquinas Rainforest Lodge.
- Band-tailed Barbthroat *Threnetes ruckeri*** A few seen, the first at our hotel near to Carara NP [ventosus].
- Green Hermit *Phaethornis guy*** Good numbers seen, the first in the Monteverde area [coruscus].
- Long-billed Hermit *Phaethornis longirostris*** Small numbers at several sites, the first at Carara NP [cephalus].

Stripe-throated Hermit *Phaethornis striigularis* A few seen, the first in Carara NP, displaying at ground level! [*saturatus*].
Scaly-breasted Hummingbird ◊ *Phaeochroa cuvierii* Seen at several sites, but best views at Los Cusingos [*maculicauda*].
Violet Sabrewing ◊ *Campylopterus hemileucurus* A real stunner, first seen well on the feeders at Monteverde. [*mellitus*].
White-necked Jacobin *Florisuga mellivora* Quite common at several sites. First at Arenal and La Fortuna. [nominate].
Brown Violetear *Colibri delphinae* A couple seen well around the gardens at Arenal Observatory.
Lesser Violetear *Colibri cyanotus* Especially common on feeders at Monteverde and Paraiso Quetzales [*cabanidis*].
Green-breasted Mango *Anthracothorax prevostii* Several seen well after our first at Cano Negro [*gracilirostris*].
[Veraguan Mango ◊ *Anthracothorax veraguensis* Male mangos seen briefly at Coto 47 were presumably this species.]
Violet-headed Hummingbird *Klais guimeti* A few in Verbena hedges, especially at Arenal and El Tapir [*merrittii*].
Black-crested Coquette ◊ *Lophornis helenae* Brilliant views of males at Heliconias Lodge, Celeste Lodge and El Tapir.



Black-crested Coquettes and Snowcaps both loved the Verbena flowers! Below, a Rufous-tailed Hummingbird.



White-crested Coquette ◇ *Lophornis adorabilis* Great views of a female in the Wilson Botanical Gardens.
Green Thorntail *Discosura conversii* First seen at Cataratas del Toro and then several at sites such as El Tapir..
Canivet's Emerald ◇ *Chlorostilbon canivetii* A few seen well, especially in the garden at Hacienda Solimar [*salvini*].
Garden Emerald ◇ *Chlorostilbon assimilis* A male at Las Cruces and two assumed to be this species, at Ujurras..
Fiery-throated Hummingbird ◇ *Panterpe insignis* First at Vólcan Irazú, then amazing views at Paraiso Quetzales [nominate].
White-tailed Emerald ◇ *Elvira chionura* (LO) A female at Las Cruces, but sadly did not return the following morning.
Coppery-headed Emerald ◇ *Elvira cupreiceps* Excellent views at the Curicancha Reserve and Cataratas del Toro.
Stripe-tailed Hummingbird ◇ *Eupherusa eximia* Just a few seen, the best at the Curicancha Reserve [*egregia*].
Black-bellied Hummingbird ◇ *Eupherusa nigriventris* Great views of several in the gardens at Cataratas del Toro.
Crowned Woodnymph *Thalurania colombica* Quite a few seen, with best views at Rancho Naturalista [*venusta*].
Blue-throated Sapphire ◇ *Hylocharis eliciae* A male seen well at Arenal Observatory, with a couple of others noted [*eliciae*].
Cinnamon Hummingbird *Amazilia rutila* A couple seen well along the Guacalillo Road north of Carara [*corallirostris*].
Rufous-tailed Hummingbird *Amazilia tzacatl* Fairly common and widespread. First seen well around Carara. [nominate].



Fiery-throated Hummingbirds and Talamanca Hummingbird were much appreciated at Paraiso Quetzales!





Mangrove Hummingbird (left) and Charming Hummingbird were two specialities found in the south whilst Magenta-throated Woodstar (below left) and Volcano Hummingbird were two goodies from the highlands!



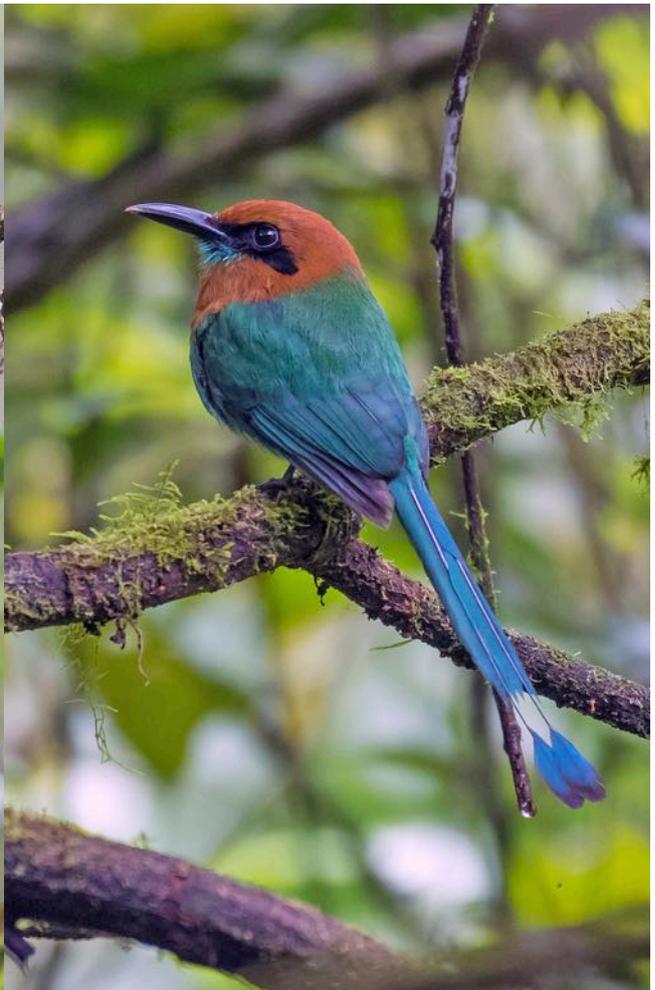
- Blue-chested Hummingbird** *Amazilia amabilis* Just one in a flowering tree at La Selva.
- Charming Hummingbird** ◇ *Amazilia decora* Excellent views at Esquinas Rainforest Lodge and at Las Cruces.
- Mangrove Hummingbird** ◇ *Amazilia boucardi* (EN) Great views of a few in the mangroves at Playa Sándalo.
- Snowy-bellied Hummingbird** ◇ *Amazilia edward* Seen well in flowering eucalypts near to San Isidro and at Las Cruces.
- Blue-vented Hummingbird** ◇ *Amazilia hoffmanni* See note.
- Snowcap** ◇ *Microchera albocoronata* Excellent views at El Tapir and also seen at Rancho Naturalista. [*parvirostris*].
- Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer** *Chalybura urochrysis* Just one seen at Arenal [*melanorrhoea*].
- Purple-throated Mountaingem** ◇ *Lampornis calolaemus* Seen on feeders at Monteverde and Cataratas del Toro [*pectoralis*].
- Grey-tailed Mountaingem** ◇ *Lampornis cinereicauda* A few on Cerro de la Muerte; best at Savegre Lodge.
- Green-crowned Brilliant** *Heliodoxa jacula* Common at the feeders at Monteverde and Cataratas del Toro [*henryi*].
- Talamanca (Admirable) Hummingbird** ◇ *Eugenes spectabilis* Plenty seen very well around Cerro de la Muerte.
- Purple-crowned Fairy** *Heliathyx barroti* A smart hummer, seen at Arenal, La Selva, Esquinas and Rancho Naturalista.
- Plain-capped Starthroat** *Heliomaster constantii* One seen along the Guacalillo Road north of Carara.
- Long-billed Starthroat** *Heliomaster longirostris* (NL) One for most of the group at the Wilson Botanical Gardens.

Magenta-throated Woodstar ◊ *Calliphlox bryantae* Great views at the feeders at Monteverde.
Volcano Hummingbird ◊ *Selasphorus flammula* See note.
Scintillant Hummingbird ◊ *Selasphorus scintilla* A few seen in the gardens at Savegre Lodge, Cerro de la Muerte.
Resplendent Quetzal ◊ *Pharomachrus mocinno* (NT) Great views on Irázu; also at Santa Elena and Cerro de la Muerte [*costaricensis*].
Slaty-tailed Trogon ◊ *Trogon massena* A few seen including a group of c6 at Carara NP [*hoffmanni*].
Black-headed Trogon ◊ *Trogon melanocephalus* Several seen well near to Hacienda Solimar.
Baird's Trogon ◊ *Trogon bairdii* (NT) Great views of a male at Carara NP. A couple of others heard.
Gartered Trogon *Trogon caligatus* A few seen, the best views at La Selva [*concinus*].
Black-throated Trogon *Trogon rufus* Seen especially well near to Flores, including a fine male on the nest! [*tenellus*].
Collared Trogon *Trogon collaris* See note.



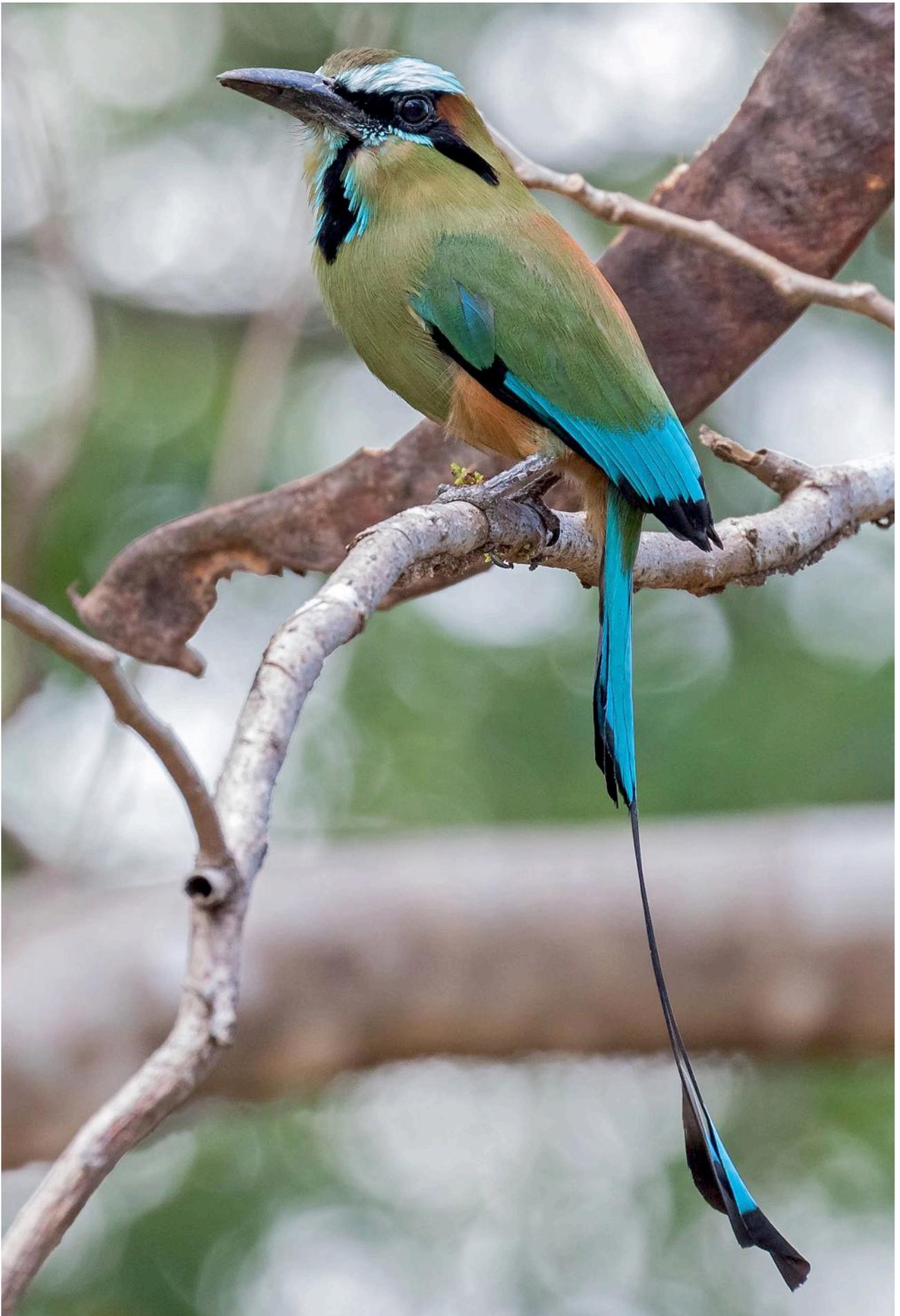
Colourful trogons delighted us at several locations, with highlights including (left to right): Black-headed; Baird's and Black-throated Trogons.

American Pygmy Kingfisher *Chloroceryle aenea* Excellent views during the Tarcoles boat trip, and at Cano Negro.
Green Kingfisher *Chloroceryle americana* A few at several sites, largest numbers on the Caño Negro boat trip [*septentrionalis*].
Amazon Kingfisher *Chloroceryle amazona* A few at several sites, largest numbers on the Caño Negro boat trip.
Ringed Kingfisher *Megaceryle torquata* Largest number on the Caño Negro boat trip [nominate].
Tody Motmot ◊ *Hylomanes momotula* After quite a search, good views of a couple at Heliconias [nominate].
Lesson's Motmot ◊ *Momotus lessonii* First seen near Carara, with small numbers at several sites subsequently [nominate].
Rufous Motmot [semirufus] *Baryphthengus martii semirufus* Great views of 2 or 3 at La Selva and at Rancho Naturalista.
Keel-billed Motmot ◊ *Electron carinatum* (VU) Excellent views of one along the Peninsula Road at Arenal.
Broad-billed Motmot *Electron platyrhynchum* Several great views, the first near to Celeste Lodge [*minus*].
Turquoise-browed Motmot ◊ *Eumomota superciliosa* Stunner! Several in the Carara and Hacienda Solimar areas [*australis*].
Rufous-tailed Jacamar *Galbula ruficauda* Several seen well, the first at Carara [*melanogenia*].
White-necked Puffbird *Notharchus hyperrhynchus* One at Carara, and great views on the drive to Monteverde [nominate].
Pied Puffbird *Notharchus tectus* Good views of one in the tree tops at La Selva [*subtectus*].
White-whiskered Puffbird *Malacoptila panamensis* Two forms: nominate seen well at Carara; *inornata* at La Selva.
Red-headed Barbet *Eubucco bourcierii* Nice views of a pair at San Gerardo [*salvini*].
Prong-billed Barbet ◊ *Semnornis frantzii* Good views of several at Santa Elena and between there and San Gerardo.
Blue-throated Toucanet ◊ *Aulacorhynchus caeruleogularis* A smart bird with several seen well [nominate].
Collared Aracari *Pteroglossus torquatus* Several seen well, especially around La Selva and Rancho Naturalista. [nominate].
Fiery-billed Aracari ◊ *Pteroglossus frantzii* Another cracker, first seen well in San Isidro.
Yellow-eared Toucanet ◊ *Selenidera spectabilis* After a 'controversial' female, good views of a male at Braulio Carillo NP.
Keel-billed Toucan *Ramphastos sulfuratus* A few seen well, including at Rancho Naturalista at the end of the tour [*brevicarinatus*].



Plenty of colour was provided by Keel-billed and Yellow-throated Toucans, Amazon and Belted Kingfishers, and Broad-billed and Keel-billed Motmots, the latter two, once again, bizarrely in a mixed pair!





The stunning, bee-eater-like Turquoise-browed Motmot is always a favourite!

Yellow-throated Toucan (Chestnut-mandibled T) *Ramphastos [ambiguus] swainsonii* (NT) Plenty seen well.

Olivaceous Piculet *Picumnus olivaceus* One seen well at Talari Lodge, with a few others heard [*flavotinctus*].

Acorn Woodpecker *Melanerpes formicivorus* Excellent views at Irázu and around the Savegre Hotel [*striatipectus*].

Golden-naped Woodpecker ◊ *Melanerpes chrysauchen* Good looks at 3+ at a nest at Esquinas Rainforest Lodge..

Black-cheeked Woodpecker *Melanerpes pucherani* Several seen well after the first near to Celeste Mountain Lodge.

Red-crowned Woodpecker *Melanerpes rubricapillus* Common in the southeast, the first around San Isidro [nominate].

Hoffmann's Woodpecker ◊ *Melanerpes hoffmannii* Plenty seen in the north, after the first at Carara.

Smoky-brown Woodpecker *Leuconotopicus fumigatus* Great views of two in the Wilson Botanical Gardens.

Hairy Woodpecker *Leuconotopicus villosus* A handful seen well in the highland areas [*extimus*].

Rufous-winged Woodpecker ◊ *Piculus simplex* Brilliant views of a pair along the Peninsula Road at Arenal; others heard.

Golden-olive Woodpecker *Colaptes rubiginosus* A few seen, the first at Monteverde. [*yucatanensis*].

Cinnamon Woodpecker *Celeus loricatus diversus* After hearing a few, we finally saw one in Braulio Carillo NP. [*diversus*].

Chestnut-colored Woodpecker ◊ *Celeus castaneus* A couple of great looks at La Selva.

Lineated Woodpecker *Dryocopus lineatus* Around five seen, the first at Cano Negro. [nominate].

Pale-billed Woodpecker ◊ *Campephilus guatemalensis* A few heard, just 3 seen including a fine pair at Carara. [nominate].



Woodpeckers included such goodies as Hoffmann's Woodpecker, the scarce Rufous-winged Woodpecker and the huge Pale-billed Woodpecker.

Northern Crested Caracara *Caracara cheriway* Small numbers at various sites, most common around Esquinas.

Yellow-headed Caracara *Milvago chimachima* Small numbers at several sites, mostly in the southeast [*cordata*].

Laughing Falcon *Herpethotes cachinnans* Seen at Hacienda Solimar and Arenal; a few others heard [nominate].

Barred Forest Falcon *Micrastur ruficollis* An adult showed well at Las Cruces, another seen at Rancho Naturalista [*interstes*].

Collared Forest Falcon *Micrastur semitorquatus* Brilliant views of an adult near to Hacienda Solimar [*naso*].

Bat Falcon *Falco ruficularis* Three seen, including a pair at the nest at La Selva [*petoensis*].

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* Just one seen (a migrant?) over La Selva [*tundrius*].

Orange-chinned Parakeet *Brotogeris jugularis* Pretty common and widespread - first noted on the Tarcoles boat trip [nominate].

Brown-hooded Parrot ◊ *Pyrilia haematotis* In flight at several sites; seen well perched at Arenal and Braulio Carillo NP [nominate].

Blue-headed Parrot *Pionus menstruus* Small numbers seen well in the San Vito area. [*rubrigularis*].

White-crowned Parrot ◊ *Pionus senilis* Plenty seen well, especially during the second half of the trip.

White-fronted Amazon ◊ *Amazona albifrons* Best views and highest numbers around Hacienda Solimar [*nana*].

Red-lored Amazon *Amazona autumnalis* Many seen well during the tour, the first at Tarcoles [*salvini*].

Yellow-naped Amazon ◊ *Amazona auropalliata* (EN) Seen at Tarcoles, then excellent views at Hacienda Solimar.

Northern Mealy Amazon ◊ *Amazona guatemalae* (NT) A few, with good scope views at Braulio Carillo NP [*virenticeps*].

Sulphur-winged Parakeet ◊ *Pyrrhura hoffmanni* Great views of a flock at Savegre just as the heavens opened! [nominate].

Olive-throated Parakeet ◊ *Eupsittula nana* Best views were around Cano Negro, especially at the hotel [*astec*].

Orange-fronted Parakeet *Eupsittula canicularis* Seen well on the way to Monteverds and at Hacienda Solimar. [nominate].

Great Green Macaw ◊ *Ara ambiguus* (EN) Great views near to La Selva, though they kept us waiting! [nominate].

Scarlet Macaw *Ara macao* Plenty seen well, especially on the Tarcoles boat trip and at Carara NP [nominate].



Parrots were well represented with Yellow-naped Amazon, Olive-throated Parakeet, Brown-hooded Parrot and Great Green Macaw being amongst the favourites.



- Finsch's Parakeet** *Psittacara finschi* Fairly common, often flying over in noisy groups!
- Pale-breasted Spinetail** *Synallaxis albescens* One seen well in the small marsh at Esquinas [latitabunda].
- Slaty Spinetail** *Synallaxis brachyura* Seen extremely well near to San Vito [nigrifumosa].
- Red-faced Spinetail** *Cranioleuca erythrops* Seen well a couple of times at San Gerardo [rufigenis].
- Spotted Barbtail** *Premnoplex brunescens* A few furtive, but occasionally showy, individuals seen at San Gerardo [brunneicauda].
- Ruddy Treerunner** *Margarornis rubiginosus* Seen well in flocks at Santa Elena and Cerro de la Muerte [nominate].
- Buffy Tuftedcheek** *Pseudocolaptes lawrencii* Seen very well on a few occasions at Cerro de la Muerte.
- Scaly-throated Foliage-gleaner** *Anabacerthia variegaticeps* Some good looks at San Gerardo [nominate].
- Lineated Foliage-gleaner** *Syndactyla subalaris* Some furtive birds seen at Santa Elena and San Gerardo [lineata].
- Western Woodhaunter** *Hyloctistes virgatus* Excellent views of a pair at Esquinas Rainforest Lodge [nominate].
- Streak-breasted Treehunter** *Thripadectes rufobrunneus* A smart bird which gave great views on Cerro de la Muerte.
- Buff-throated Foliage-gleaner** *Automolus ochrolaemus* See note.
- Ruddy Foliage-gleaner** *Automolus rubiginosus* (H) Heard at Las Cruces, but sadly refused to budge [fumosus].
- Tawny-throated Leaf-tosser** *Sclerurus mexicanus* Brilliant views at Arenal and near Rancho Naturalista. [pullus].
- Grey-throated Leaf-tosser** *Sclerurus albigularis* (NT) See note.
- Scaly-throated Leaf-tosser** *Sclerurus guatemalensis* (LO) One by the stream at Carara NP [nominate].
- Plain Xenops** *Xenops minutus* A small number at scattered sites, the first at Carara [ridgwayi].
- Plain-brown Woodcreeper** *Dendrocincla fuliginosa* One seen and a couple heard at Rancho Naturalista [ridgwayi].



Finsch's Parakeet and Blue-throated Toucanet... two more colourful specialities!

- Tawny-winged Woodcreeper** *◊ Dendrocincla anabatina* Excellent views of c6 at Los Cusingos [*saturata*].
- Ruddy Woodcreeper** *Dendrocincla homochroa* Excellent views of one at an antswarm at Heliconias Lodge. [*acedesta*].
- Long-tailed Woodcreeper** *◊ Deconychura longicauda* Excellent views at Carara NP. A scarce and difficult bird! [*typica*].
- Olivaceous Woodcreeper** *Sittasomus griseicapillus* Seen at Rancho Naturalista: several heard at other sites [*sylvioides*].
- Wedge-billed Woodcreeper** *Glyphorhynchus spirurus* Small numbers at many sites, the first at San Gerardo [*pectoralis*].
- Northern Barred Woodcreeper** *Dendrocolaptes sanctithomae* A couple heard, but only seen at Heliconias Lodge [*hesperius*].
- Cocoa Woodcreeper** *Xiphorhynchus susurrans* Reasonably common by voice. First seen at Carara NP [*costaricensis*].
- Black-striped Woodcreeper** *Xiphorhynchus lachrymosus* Great views at Esquinas Rainforest Lodge [*eximius*].
- Spotted Woodcreeper** *Xiphorhynchus erythropygius* Seen well at several sites, the first at San Gerardo. Great calls! [*punctigula*].
- Streak-headed Woodcreeper** *Lepidocolaptes souleyetii* Common in open woodland. First seen at Carara [*compressus*].
- Spot-crowned Woodcreeper** *Lepidocolaptes affinis* Only seen on the walk from Los Robles to Savegre [*neglectus*].
- Brown-billed Scythebill** *Campylorhamphus pusillus* Excellent views of a responsive bird at San Gerardo [*borealis*].



Long-tailed Woodcreepers are always scarce whilst this juvenile Grey-throated Leaf-tosser was rather startled in its burrow!



A distinctive woodcreeper is a blessing in disguise! Black-striped Woodcreeper from Esquinas!

- Rufous-rumped Antwren** *Euchrepomis callinota* (H) Heard at Cerro Silencio, but sadly none could be seen [nominate].
- Russet Antshrike** *Thamnistes anabatinus* An antbird resembling a furnarid, seen in flocks at a few sites [saturatus].
- Dot-winged Antwren** *Microrhopias quixensis* Several seen in a flock at Carara NP [virgatus].
- Checker-throated Antwren** *Epinecophylla fulviventris* Some decent views of a pair at Rancho Naturalista.
- White-flanked Antwren** *Myrmotherula axillaris* An elusive singing male was seen in Braulio Carillo NP [albigula].
- Slaty Antwren** *Myrmotherula schisticolor* A few seen with first views in Carara NP and at San Gerardo [nominate].
- Plain Antvireo** *Dysithamnus mentalis* Some very good looks at San Gerardo [septentrionalis].
- Streak-crowned Antvireo** ◊ *Dysithamnus striaticeps* Excellent views of males on two dates at Arenal.
- Barred Antshrike** *Thamnophilus doliatus* A few seen, more heard. First seen on the Tarcoles boat trip [intermedius].
- Black-hooded Antshrike** ◊ *Thamnophilus bridgesi* Several seen well, the first at Carara NP.
- Black-crowned Antshrike** *Thamnophilus atrinucha* A couple showed well at La Selva [nominate].
- Fasciated Antshrike** *Cymbilaimus lineatus* After hearing them at Arenal, great views of a pair at La Selva [fasciatus].



This pair of Fasciated Antshrikes at La Selva were much appreciated.



A couple of localized antbirds... Streak-crowned Antwren and Black-hooded Antshrike.

- Great Antshrike** *Taraba major* A fine male showed well at Arenal. Others heard... [*melanocrissus*].
- Ocellated Antbird** ◇ *Phaenostictus mcleannani* Seen at antswarms at San Gerardo and Heliconias. One of the best! [*saturatus*].
- Bicolored Antbird** *Gymnopithys bicolor* Good numbers seen at a few antswarms, but best at Los Cusingos [*olivascens*].
- Dusky Antbird** *Cercomacra tyrannina* Many heard. First seen well at Carara NP [*crepera*].
- Spotted Antbird** *Hylophylax naevioides* A real stunner with several great looks, the first at San Gerardo [*capnitis*].
- Chestnut-backed Antbird** *Myrmeciza exsul* Many seen, the first at Carara. Not an obligate antswarm follower [*exsul-group*].
- Dull-mantled Antbird** ◇ *Myrmeciza laemosticta* Brilliant views at our feet at Arenal was the highlight.
- Bare-crowned Antbird** ◇ *Gymnocichla nudiceps* A pair seen well along the Peninsula Road at Arenal.
- Zeledon's Antbird** ◇ *Myrmeciza zeledoni* Many good views; particularly tame at the antswarm at Heliconias [nominate].
- Black-faced Antthrush** *Formicarius analis* Some amazing at Carara, particularly the confused bird at the hotel [*hoffmanni*].
- Black-headed Antthrush** *Formicarius nigricapillus* Decent views of one at San Gerardo; others heard there [nominate].
- Streak-chested Antpitta** ◇ *Hylopezus perspicillatus* An incredible performance at Carara NP; our bird of the trip! [*lizanoi*].
- Thicket Antpitta** ◇ *Hylopezus dives* A bit of strategy led to some fabulous views of this smart bird at Arenal [nominate].
- Silvery-fronted Tapaculo** ◇ *Scytalopus argentifrons* It took a while but we got fine views above Savegre Lodge [nominate].
- Greenish Elaenia** *Myiopagis viridicata* A few of this inconspicuous tyrannid seen, the first in the garden at Carara [*accola*].
- Yellow-bellied Elaenia** *Elaenia flavogaster* Noisy and conspicuous where found. First seen at San Lorenzo [*subpagana*].
- Mountain Elaenia** *Elaenia frantzii* Common at Vulcan Irazú and on Cerro de la Muerte [nominate].
- Yellow-bellied Tyrannulet** ◇ *Ornithion semiflavum* Great views of a single then a pair at Los Cusingos.
- Northern Beardless Tyrannulet** *Camptostoma imberbe* One seen and others heard on the boat trip at Caño Negro.
- Southern Beardless Tyrannulet** *Camptostoma obsoletum* (H) Heard at Talari Lodge, but no views [*flaviventre*].
- Torrent Tyrannulet** *Serpophaga cinerea* Good views of a couple along a pleasant river near to Rancho Naturalista [*grisea*].
- Yellow Tyrannulet** *Capsiempis flaveola* A pair seen well near to Celeste Mountain Lodge [*semiflava*].
- Mistletoe Tyrannulet** *Zimmerius parvus* Fairly common, especially by voice. First seen well at Curicancha.
- Rufous-browed Tyrannulet** ◇ *Phylloscartes superciliaris* Seen quite well in a mixed flock at San Gerardo [nominate].
- Olive-striped Flycatcher** *Mionectes olivaceus* Just a few seen at Santa Elena and San Gerardo. [nominate].
- Ochre-bellied Flycatcher** *Mionectes oleagineus* Small numbers at several sites, the first at Carara NP [*assimilis*].
- Slaty-capped Flycatcher** *Leptopogon superciliaris* A few at Rancho Naturalista were our only ones [nominate].
- Northern Scrub Flycatcher** *Sublegatus arenarum* One in the rain on the Tarcoles boat trip was the only one [nominate].
- Black-capped Pygmy Tyrant** *Myiornis atricapillus* Great views at La Selva. Tiny, the Neotropics' smallest passerine!
- Northern Bentbill** ◇ *Oncostoma cinereigulare* Plenty heard with some excellent views near Hacienda Solimar.
- Scale-crested Pygmy Tyrant** *Lophotriccus pileatus* Regularly heard and a few seen; best at Las Cruces [*luteiventris*].
- Slaty-headed Tody-Flycatcher** *Poecilatriccus sylvia* Its quiet purrs give it away; good looks at Carara NP [*schistaceiceps*].
- Common Tody-Flycatcher** *Todirostrum cinereum* Fairly common and widespread. First seen at Carara [*wetmorei*].
- Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher** *Todirostrum nigriceps* A few heard, and a couple seen well at San Gerardo.
- Eye-ringed Flatbill** *Rhynchocyclus brevirostris* Three in mixed flocks at Esquinas Rainforest Lodge [nominate].
- Yellow-olive Flatbill** *Tolmomyias sulphureus* More often heard than seen. First seen at Carara [*cinereiceps*].

White-throated Spadebill *Platyrinchus mystaceus* One seen well at Santa Elena and more at San Gerardo [*neglectus*].
Golden-crowned Spadebill *Platyrinchus coronatus* (H) Sadly, only heard at Los Cusingos [*superciliaris*].
Tawny-chested Flycatcher ◊ *Aphanotriccus capitalis* (VU) Brilliant views at Rancho Naturalista - **the** site for this one!
Black Phoebe *Sayornis nigricans* Seen a few times along various rivers [*amnicola*].
Northern Tufted Flycatcher *Mitrephanes phaeocercus* A few around Monteverde and Cerro de la Muerte [*aurantiventris*].
Olive-sided Flycatcher *Contopus cooperi* (NT) Around 8 or so seen, the first couple around the Monteverde area.
Dark Pewee ◊ *Contopus lugubris* Great views of a pair just near to the Savegre Hotel.
Ochraceous Pewee ◊ *Contopus ochraceus* Brilliant views of one or two individuals near to Paraiso Quetzales.



Tyrant flycatchers show great diversity! Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant, the localized Tawny-chested Flycatcher, a Bright-rumped Attila that had just devoured a gecko and the rare Ochraceous Pewee in the drizzle!



Western Wood Pewee *Contopus sordidulus* Just one seen and heard on the walk out from San Gerardo.
Eastern Wood Pewee *Contopus virens* A relatively common migrant, a familiar sound for the second half of the tour.
Tropical Pewee *Contopus cinereus* A few seen, the first during the Tarcoles boat trip [*brachytarsus-group*].
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher *Empidonax flaviventris* A few seen well, the first in Carara NP.
 [Alder Flycatcher / Willow Flycatcher *Empidonax alnorum/trailii* See note.]
White-throated Flycatcher ◊ *Empidonax albigularis* Great views near Rancho Naturalista [*australis*].
Yellowish Flycatcher ◊ *Empidonax flavescens* A few seen well, especially at the Santa Elena Reserve [*australis*].

Black-capped Flycatcher ◊ *Empidonax atriceps* Several seen well on Cerro de la Muerte.

Long-tailed Tyrant *Colonia colonus* A few seen well in the La Selva area [*leuconota*].

Piratic Flycatcher *Legatus leucophaeus* A very common sound and a few seen well, the first at Carara [nominate].

Rusty-margined Flycatcher *Myiozetetes cayanensis* One seen near to the Esquinas Rainforest Lodge [*hellmayri*].

Social Flycatcher *Myiozetetes similis* Two forms: *columbianus* widespread, first at Carara; *texensis* in the north.

Grey-capped Flycatcher *Myiozetetes granadensis* Fairly common, especially in the far southwest [nominate].

Great Kiskadee *Pitangus sulphuratus* Common and widespread [*guatemalensis*].

White-ringed Flycatcher ◊ *Conopias albobittatus* Seen at La Selva and then well nearby near to Flores [*distinctus*].

Golden-bellied Flycatcher ◊ *Myiodynastes hemichrysus* Seen well in the San Gerardo area and again at Savegre.

Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher *Myiodynastes luteiventris* A few, including at San Gerardo. Very similar to Streaked!

Streaked Flycatcher *Myiodynastes maculatus* Plenty seen well, the first around Carara [*maculatus-group*].

Boat-billed Flycatcher *Megarynchus pitangua* Common, especially by voice. First seen on the Tarcoles boat trip [*mexicanus*].

Tropical Kingbird *Tyrannus melancholicus* Common and widespread [*satrapa*].

Scissor-tailed Flycatcher *Tyrannus forficatus* A couple seen flying by at Hacienda Solimar.

Fork-tailed Flycatcher *Tyrannus savana* First near to Cano Negro and seen again on the Osa Peninsula [*monachus*].

Eastern Kingbird *Tyrannus tyrannus* Especially common at the end of the tour with 1000s flying over.

Rufous Mourner *Rhytipterna holerythra* One with a familiar voice. First seen at San Gerardo. [nominate].

Dusky-capped Flycatcher *Myiarchus tuberculifer* A few seen, the first near to Monteverde [*nigricapillus*].

Panamanian Flycatcher ◊ *Myiarchus panamensis* Seen well during the Tarcoles boat trip and again at Caldera [*actiosus*].

Nutting's Flycatcher ◊ *Myiarchus nuttingi* One seen well along the Guacalillo Road, north of Carara NP [*flavidior*].

Great Crested Flycatcher *Myiarchus crinitus* A couple heard; one seen at Rancho Naturalista at the end of the tour.

Brown-crested Flycatcher *Myiarchus tyrannulus* Several seen well near to Hacienda Solimar [*brachyurus*].

Bright-rumped Attila *Attila spadiceus* A few seen well including one eating a lizard at Hacienda Solimar [*citreopyga*].

Turquoise Cotinga ◊ *Cotinga ridgwayi* (VU) Brilliant views of males at San Isidro and from the Rincon Bridge.

Three-wattled Bellbird ◊ *Procnias tricarunculatus* (VU) Stunning males at Santa Elena and even closer at Curicancha!

Rufous Piha *Lipaugus unirufus* Great views of two at Los Cusingos and a couple of others heard [nominate].

Yellow-billed Cotinga ◊ *Carpodectes antoniae* (EN) Excellent views of 5+ including several males, at the Rincon Bridge.

Purple-throated Fruitcrow *Querula purpurata* A group of about four seen well at La Selva.

Long-tailed Manakin ◊ *Chiroxiphia linearis* Several encounters with this smart one, the first bathing at Carara NP.

White-ruffed Manakin ◊ *Corapipo altera* Briefly in Braulio Carillo NP, then great views at Rancho Naturalista [nominate].

Blue-crowned Manakin *Lepidothrix coronata* Seen at a few sites with best views of bathing birds at Carara NP [*velutina*].

White-collared Manakin ◊ *Manacus candei* Best were the amazing lekking birds at La Selva. Real stunners!

Orange-collared Manakin ◊ *Manacus aurantiacus* Seen a few times; best at the lek at Esquinas R. L. Stunners!

White-crowned Manakin *Pseudopipra pipra* A couple of males seen well at Rancho Naturalista [*anthracina*].

Red-capped Manakin *Ceratopipra mentalis* Seen at a few sites; best views of bathing birds at Carara NP [nominate].

Northern Royal Flycatcher ◊ *Onychorhynchus mexicanus* Brilliant views of a pair at Carara NP [nominate].



Two more very special birds... Northern Royal Flycatcher and White-collared Manakin.

Sulphur-rumped Myiobius *Myiobius sulphureipygius* A few seen well, the first at Carara NP [*aureatus*].

Ruddy-tailed Flycatcher *Terenotriccus erythrurus* Great views at Los Cusingos and 1 at Rancho Naturalista [*fulvicularis*].

Black-crowned Tityra *Tityra inquisitor* Only seen at Carara and again from the Rincon Bridge [*fraserii*].

Masked Tityra *Tityra semifasciata* Widespread in small numbers. First at San Gerardo [*costaricensis*].

Northern Schiffornis *Schiffornis veraepacis* Heard, and seen briefly at the antswarm at Heliconias Lodge [nominate].

Barred Becard *Pachyramphus versicolor* Good views of a pair on Cerro de la Muerte, and others heard [*costaricensis*].

Cinnamon Becard *Pachyramphus cinnamomeus* Quite a few seen, the first in the clearing at San Gerardo [*fulvidior*].

White-winged Becard *Pachyramphus polychopterus* Only seen well at the hotel at Carara [*similis*].

Rose-throated Becard *Pachyramphus aglaiae* Plenty seen, the first at Carara. Not much of a rose throat! [*hypophaeus*].

Rufous-browed Peppershrike *Cyclarhis gujanensis* (H) A few heard during the Tarcoles boat trip [*subflavescens*].

Green Shrike-Vireo ◇ *Vireolanius pulchellus* A few heard and some neck-breaking views at Esquinas R. L. [*verticalis*].

Mangrove Vireo ◇ *Vireo pallens* Good views of one on the Tarcoles boat trip [nominate].

Yellow-throated Vireo *Vireo flavifrons* Just two of these smart migrants, the first at Carara.

Yellow-winged Vireo ◇ *Vireo carmioli* This smart speciality was quite common around Cerro de la Muerte.

Brown-capped Vireo *Vireo leucophrys* Just two, between Los Robles and the Savegre Hotel [*costaricensis*].

Red-eyed Vireo *Vireo olivaceus* Quite a few migrants seen, the first at Carara NP [nominate].

Yellow-green Vireo *Vireo flavoviridis* Small numbers at a few sites, the first at Carara.

Scrub Greenlet *Hylophilus flavipes* Two seen well in open country near to Esquinas Rainforest Lodge [*viridiflavus*].

Tawny-crowned Greenlet *Hylophilus ochraceiceps* Seen in mixed flocks at a few sites; often fairly furtive [*pacificus*].

Lesser Greenlet *Hylophilus decurtatus* Common by voice; several seen after the first at Carara NP [nominate].

Azure-hooded Jay ◇ *Cyanolyca cucullata* Great views of this smart jay at San Gerardo [nominate].

Silvery-throated Jay ◇ *Cyanolyca argentigula* Brilliant views of a confiding individual on Cerro de la Muerte [*albior*].

Brown Jay *Psilorhinus morio* Common and noisy [*palliatu*s]!

White-throated Magpie-Jay ◇ *Calocitta formosa* Seen well on a few occasions, especially at Hacienda Solimar [*pompata*].



White-throated Magpie-Jays showed very well at Hacienda Solimar.

Black-and-yellow Phainoptila ◇ *Phainoptila melanoxantha* Several seen well on Cerro de la Muerte [*parkeri*].

Long-tailed Silky-Flycatcher ◇ *Ptiliogonys caudatus* First on Volcan Irazu, then at various sites on Cerro de la Muerte.

Sand Martin *Riparia riparia* A few migrants seen, especially around La Selva [nominate].

Mangrove Swallow *Tachycineta albilinea* Greatest numbers on the Tarcoles boat trip where they even sat on the boat!

Grey-breasted Martin *Progne chalybea* Common and widespread in the lowlands [nominate].

Blue-and-white Swallow *Notiochelidon cyanoleuca* Fairly common and widespread.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow *Stelgidopteryx serripennis* Not uncommon. First on the drive to Monteverde [*serripennis-group*].

Southern Rough-winged Swallow *Stelgidopteryx ruficollis* Plenty. Seen with Northern R-w S a few times.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* Good numbers of migrants seen [*erythrogaster*].

American Cliff Swallow *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota* Best were the good numbers around La Selva.

Band-backed Wren *Campylorhynchus zonatus* Seen around the lodge at San Gerardo and La Selva [*costaricensis*].

Rufous-backed Wren ◇ *Campylorhynchus capistratus* A smart wren. Plenty seen after the first at Carara NP [nominate].



Two more localized goodies... Spot-breasted Wren and White-lored Gnatcatcher.

- Black-throated Wren** ◇ *Pheugopedius atrogularis* A cracking wren, seen well at Arenal and Rancho Naturalista.
- Black-bellied Wren** *Pheugopedius fasciatoventris* Great views of an obliging bird at Carara. Heard elsewhere [*melanogaster*].
- Spot-breasted Wren** ◇ *Pheugopedius maculipectus* Great views of a pair on the boat trip at Caño Negro [*umbrinus*].
- Rufous-breasted Wren** *Pheugopedius rutilus* A few seen well, the first at Carara NP [*hyperythrus*].
- Banded Wren** ◇ *Thryophilus pleurostictus* Seen well along the Guacalillo Road, and heard at Hacienda Solimar [*ravus*].
- Rufous-and-white Wren** *Thryophilus rufalbus* An excellent songster, first seen in Carara NP [*castanonotus*].
- Cabanis's Wren** ◇ *Cantorchilus modestus* Some great views around Monteverde, and heard elsewhere.
- Canebrake Wren** ◇ *Cantorchilus zeledoni* Good views of one during the boat trip at Caño Negro.
- Isthmian Wren** ◇ *Cantorchilus elutus* Seen well just outside San Isidro, and others heard.
- Riverside Wren** ◇ *Cantorchilus semibadius* Seen well at Carara NP, Esquinas R. L. and near the Rincon Bridge.
- Bay Wren** *Cantorchilus nigricapillus* Best views in the garden at Rancho Naturalista [*costaricensis*].
- Stripe-breasted Wren** ◇ *Cantorchilus thoracicus* Often heard, first seen well at San Gerardo.
- House Wren** *Troglodytes aedon* Two forms: *intermedius* (widespread) and *inquietus* (Pacific coast) [southern *musculus* group].
- Ochraceous Wren** ◇ *Troglodytes ochraceus* Seen well around Monteverde/San Gerardo; heard Cerro de la Muerte [nominate].
- Timberline Wren** ◇ *Thryorchilus browni* Great views on Volcan Irazú and also heard at Cerro de la Muerte.
- White-breasted Wood Wren** *Henicorhina leucosticta* See note.
- Grey-breasted Wood Wren** *Henicorhina leucophrys* First seen at Volcan Irazu. Heard at a few other sites [*collina*].
- Northern Nightingale-Wren** ◇ *Microcerculus philomela* Responsive birds seen at San Gerardo and Arenal; others heard.
- Southern Nightingale-wren** *Microcerculus marginatus* (H) A few heard but none responded well [*luscina*].
- Song Wren** *Cyphorhinus phaeocephalus* This smart wren was seen well at San Gerardo [*richardsoni*].
- Long-billed Gnatwren** *Ramphocaenus melanurus* Seen well at Carara NP; heard at several other sites [*rufiventris*].
- White-lored Gnatcatcher** ◇ *Polioptila albiloris* Seen well along the Guacalillo Road and at Punta Morales [nominate].



Montane thrushes included the common and conspicuous Sooty Thrush, and the retiring Black-headed Nightingale-Thrush.

Tropical Gnatcatcher *Polioptila plumbea* Heard more than seen, most obvious around Hacienda Solimar [*superciliaris*].
Tropical Mockingbird *Mimus gilvus* Several seen. A recent colonist which is increasing its range [*tolimensis*].
Black-faced Solitaire ◊ *Myadestes melanops* Many great looks at Santa Elena and Cerro de la Muerte. Great song.
Black-billed Nightingale-Thrush ◊ *Catharus gracilirostris* Common at Vólcan Irazú and Cerro de la Muerte [*gracilirostris*].



The lovely Black-billed Nightingale-Thrush was a regular feature of the highlands.

Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush *Catharus aurantirostris* Two forms: *costaricensis* (Monteverde), *griseiceps* Las Cruces.
Slaty-backed Nightingale-thrush ◊ *Catharus fuscater* A few seen well at Santa Elena and San Gerardo. Smart bird! [*hellmayri*].
Ruddy-capped Nightingale-Thrush ◊ *Catharus frantzii* Confiding birds seen at Cerro de la Muerte and Santa Elena [*frantzii*].
Black-headed Nightingale-Thrush ◊ *Catharus mexicanus* A smart bird, seen well at San Gerardo and Arenal [*carrikeri*].
Swainson's Thrush *Catharus ustulatus* Small numbers of this widespread migrant at several sites [*swainsoni*-group].
Sooty Thrush ◊ *Turdus nigrescens* Common and confiding at Vólcan Irazú and Cerro de la Muerte.
Mountain Thrush ◊ *Turdus plebejus* A highland speciality that was easiest to see on Cerro de la Muerte [nominate].
Pale-vented Thrush ◊ *Turdus obsoletus* (H) Only heard at San Gerardo. A tricky bird [nominate]!
Clay-colored Thrush *Turdus grayi* Costa Rica's national bird was common and widespread [*casius*].
White-throated Thrush *Turdus assimilis* Two forms: *leucauchen* at San Gerardo; *cnephosus* at Las Cruces.
House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* (introduced) This pest was surprisingly scarce, seeming to favour gas stations!
Tricolored Munia *Lonchura malacca* (introduced) Two in flight at the ricefields at Ciudad Niely.
Yellow-bellied Siskin *Spinus xanthogastrus* A couple briefly on Cerro de la Muerte were our only ones [nominate].
Scrub Euphonia *Euphonia affinis* Seen well near to Hacienda Solimar [nominate].
Yellow-crowned Euphonia ◊ *Euphonia luteicapilla* Fairly widespread and common by voice. First seen at Carara.
Thick-billed Euphonia *Euphonia laniirostris* A few seen well at Las Cruces [*crassirostris*].
Yellow-throated Euphonia *Euphonia hirundinacea* Several seen well, the first in the Carara area [*gnatho*].
Spot-crowned Euphonia ◊ *Euphonia imitans* Excellent views at Los Cusingos and Esquinas Rainforest Lodge.
Olive-backed Euphonia ◊ *Euphonia gouldi* Seen well at La Selva and Rancho Naturalista [*praetermissa*].
White-vented Euphonia *Euphonia minuta* One coming to a fruiting tree in Braulio Carillo NP [*humilis*].
Tawny-capped Euphonia ◊ *Euphonia anaeae* A few of these smart birds seen well, the first at Arenal [nominate].
Golden-browed Chlorophonia ◊ *Chlorophonia callophrys* Seen well between Santa Elena and San Gerardo; others heard.
Rufous-collared Sparrow *Zonotrichia capensis* Particularly common at Vólcan Irazú and Cerro de la Muerte [*costaricensis*].
Volcano Junco ◊ *Junco vulcani* Great views at Vólcan Irazú and again at Cerro de la Muerte.
Stripe-headed Sparrow *Peucaea ruficauda* Seen well along the Guacalillo Road and Hacienda Solimar [nominate].
Cabanis's Ground Sparrow ◊ *Melospiza cabanisi* After a long wet search, brilliant views of a pair near to Ujurrás.



Volcano Juncos were often confiding whilst we were also pleased to get good looks at Yellow-thighed Finch and White-naped Brushfinch.



- White-eared Ground Sparrow** ◇ *Melospiza leucotis* A real stunner, seen well around Monteverde [*nominata*].
- Olive Sparrow** *Arremonops rufivirgatus* Seen well along the Guacalillo road and at Hacienda Solimar [*superciliosus*].
- Black-striped Sparrow** *Arremonops conirostris* First seen at Cano Negro and quite common thereafter.
- Orange-billed Sparrow** *Arremon aurantirostris* Two forms: *rufidorsalis* in the Caribbean; *nominata* in the Pacific.
- Chestnut-capped Brushfinch** *Arremon brunneinucha* A few seen, the first at Volcan Irazu [*elsae*].
- Costa Rican Brushfinch** ◇ *Arremon costaricensis* Great views of this scarce bird near to San Vito.
- Sooty-faced Finch** ◇ *Arremon crassirostris* Excellent views of a singing male well at San Gerardo.
- Large-footed Finch** ◇ *Pezopetes capitalis* Easy to see at Vólcan Irazú and at Cerro de la Muerte.
- White-naped Brushfinch** *Atlapetes albinucha* Great looks at a pair at Curicancha, Monteverde [*parvirostris*].
- Yellow-thighed Finch** ◇ *Pselliophorus tibialis* Seen well at Santa Elena and again at Cerro de la Muerte.
- Common Bush Tanager** *Chlorospingus flavopectus* Most common around San Gerardo/Monteverde [*regionalis*].
- Sooty-capped Bush Tanager** ◇ *Chlorospingus pileatus* Easy to see at Vólcan Irazú and at Cerro de la Muerte.
- Ashy-throated Bush Tanager** *Chlorospingus canigularis* Harry did well to find this one at Rancho Naturalista [*olivaceiceps*].
- Wrenthrush** ◇ *Zeledonia coronata* Some great views of this unique species on Cerro de la Muerte.
- Eastern Meadowlark** *Sturnella magna* A handful seen, especially around Hacienda Solimar [*alticola*].
- Red-breasted Blackbird** *Sturnella militaris* A few seen well in open country, a very smart bird.



Being in its own family, the Wrenthrush (or Zeledonia) was much appreciated (this is the bird we saw just after the tour). Euphonias were well represented, with Spot-crowned (left), Tawny-capped and Yellow-throated Euphonias being three of the many species seen.



Yellow-billed Cacique *Amblycercus holosericeus* One seen well from the Rincon Bridge. Others heard [nominate].
Chestnut-headed Oropendola *Psarocolius wagleri* First at Curicancha, most obvious near La Selva and Rancho [ridgwayi].
Crested Oropendola *Psarocolius decumanus* A couple of fly-bys at Las Cruces, Wilson Botanical Gardens [melanterus].
Montezuma Oropendola ◊ *Psarocolius montezuma* Great action and sounds at the colony at San Gerardo.
Scarlet-rumped Cacique *Cacicus microrhynchus* Great looks at Sandala Beach on the Osa Peninsula [nominate].
Streak-backed Oriole *Icterus pustulatus* Excellent views, including nest building, at Hacienda Solimar [sclateri].
Baltimore Oriole *Icterus galbula* A total of seven noted, mostly in the La Selva area.
Spot-breasted Oriole ◊ *Icterus pectoralis* Great views of a smart pair at Hacienda Solimar [espinachi].
Black-cowled Oriole ◊ *Icterus prothemelas* A few seen well, the first near to Celeste Mountain Lodge [nominate].
Red-winged Blackbird *Agelaius phoeniceus* Common. Great to watch the displaying males at Hacienda Solimar [grinnelli].
Giant Cowbird *Molothrus oryzivorus* First seen on the journey to Monteverde, with a few others seen [impacifus].
Shiny Cowbird *Molothrus bonariensis* A few seen, a pest that is expanding [cabanisii].
Bronzed Cowbird *Molothrus aeneus* Widespread in small numbers, especially in the southeast [nominate].
Melodious Blackbird *Dives dives* First seen at Carara. Expanding its range southwards due to deforestation.
Nicaraguan Grackle ◊ *Quiscalus nicaraguensis* Excellent views of several during the Caño Negro boat trip.



Nicaraguan Grackle was once again seen well. Noisy Montezuma Oropendolas and stunning Spot-breasted Orioles were also much appreciated.



Great-tailed Grackle *Quiscalus mexicanus* Very common and widespread [*peruvianus*].

Ovenbird *Seiurus auropilla* Great views of two or three at the Finca Ecologica near Monteverde.

Northern Waterthrush *Parkesia noveboracensis* Plenty seen well, first in the garden of our hotel at Carara.

Golden-winged Warbler *Vermivora chrysoptera* (NT) A fine male seen well at San Gerardo.

Flame-throated Warbler ◊ *Oreothlypis gutturalis* A real cracker, first at Vólcan Irazú. A few more on Cerro de la Muerte.

Tennessee Warbler *Leiothlypis peregrina* A few migrants seen, the first around Celeste Lodge.

Grey-crowned Yellowthroat *Geothlypis poliocephala* A few seen well, the first at Hacienda Solimar [*palpebralis*].

Chiriqui Yellowthroat ◊ *Geothlypis chiriquensis* Took a bit of hunting out, but great views of a pair near to San Vito.

Mourning Warbler *Geothlypis philadelphia* Great views of a male whilst looking for crakes at La Fortuna.

Olive-crowned Yellowthroat *Geothlypis semiflava* Seen well at a couple of sites, first near Caño Negro [*bairdi*].

American Redstart *Setophaga ruticilla* Two seen, including a fine male, on the Tarcoles boat trip.

Tropical Parula *Setophaga pitiayumi* Seen/heard at a number of sites. First seen at San Gerardo [*inornata*].

Blackburnian Warbler *Setophaga fusca* Just a handful of these smart warblers seen, mostly around San Gerardo.

American Yellow Warbler *Setophaga aestiva* Good numbers of migrants seen, the first at the hotel in Carara.

Mangrove Warbler *Setophaga petechia* Several seen with best views during the Tarcoles boat trip [*erithachorides*].

Chestnut-sided Warbler *Setophaga pensylvanica* Some lovely looks at cracking males, the first at Carara NP.

Black-throated Green Warbler *Setophaga virens* Just a handful seen in flocks at San Gerardo.

Buff-rumped Warbler *Myiothlypis fulvicauda* Two forms: *veraguensis* in the southeast; *leucopygia* elsewhere.

Rufous-capped Warbler *Basileuterus rufifrons* A handful noted, the first around our hotel at Carara [*delatirii-group*].

Black-cheeked Warbler ◊ *Basileuterus melanogenys* A real cracker, seen at Vólcan Irazú and Cerro de la Muerte [n nominate].



Cracking warblers included the gorgeous Flame-throated Warbler, Mangrove Warbler and the lovely Black-cheeked Warbler.



Golden-crowned Warbler *Basileuterus culicivorus* Seen at a few sites, the first at San Gerardo [*culicivorus-group*].

Black-eared Warbler ◊ *Basileuterus melanotis* A recent split from Three-striped Warbler: common around Monteverde.

Canada Warbler *Cardellina canadensis* A total of c20 noted in mixed flocks throughout the tour.

Wilson's Warbler *Cardellina pusilla* A few on Vólcan Irazú, and quite common at Cerro de la Muerte.

Slate-throated Whitestart *Myioborus miniatus* Most common in the Monteverde area [*comptus*].

Collared Whitestart ◊ *Myioborus torquatus* A stunner, seen well at Santa Elena and Cerro de la Muerte.

Dusky-faced Tanager *Mitrospingus cassinii* A group seen on a couple of occasions at La Selva [*costaricensis*].

Flame-colored Tanager *Piranga bidentata* A few on Cerro de la Muerte; best views around Savegre Lodge [*citrea*].

Tooth-billed Tanager *Piranga lutea* Seen a few times in the highlands, the first on the way to San Gerardo [*testacea*].

Summer Tanager *Piranga rubra* Just one seen, at Carara NP [n nominate].

Scarlet Tanager *Piranga olivacea* A few migrants seen, including some fine males. Most common in the Arenal area.

Red-crowned Ant Tanager *Habia rubica* Good views of at least 4 attending ants at Las Cruces, Wilson Botanical Gardens.

Red-throated Ant Tanager *Habia fuscicauda* First seen well at Arenal, with others at La Selva etc. [n nominate].

Black-cheeked Ant Tanager ◊ *Habia atrimaxillaris* (EN) Great views of 2 or 3 groups at Esquinas Rainforest Lodge.

Carmioli's Tanager ◊ *Chlorothraupis carmioli* A noisy flock leader, probably seen best at Arenal [n nominate].

Black-thighed Grosbeak ◊ *Pheucticus tibialis* Heard a few times on Cerro de la Muerte; sadly just flight views for some.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak *Pheucticus ludovicianus* Just a male on the way to Monteverde and a female at La Selva.

Black-faced Grosbeak ◊ *Caryothraustes poliogaster* A few near Celeste then common at La Selva [*scapularis*].



Black-faced Grosbeak and Flame-coloured Tanager... the amazing birds from this tour seem limitless!

Blue-black Grosbeak *Cyanocompsa cyanooides* Easier to hear than see; we did manage a few good looks [*caerulescens*].

Painted Bunting *Passerina ciris* (NT) A male seen well at our hotel at Carara [*pallidior*].

Grey-headed Tanager *Eucometis penicillata* Several seen very well, especially at the antswarm at Los Cusingos [*stictothorax*].

White-shouldered Tanager *Tachyphonus luctuosus* A few seen with best looks at Carara NP [*nitidissimus*].

Tawny-crested Tanager *Tachyphonus delatrii* Best was the flock of c12 in an understorey flock in Braulio Carillo NP.

White-lined Tanager *Tachyphonus rufus* Just a few around Ujurras and Rancho Naturalista at the end of the trip.

White-throated Shrike-Tanager ◊ *Lanio leucothorax* Excellent views of a pair at Esquinas R. L. [*melanopygius*].

Crimson-collared Tanager ◊ *Ramphocelus sanguinolentus* First at San Gerardo; best views at Celeste Lodge [*apricus*].

Passerini's Tanager ◊ *Ramphocelus passerinii* First seen well at San Gerardo; very common along the Caribbean Slope.

Cherrie's Tanager ◊ *Ramphocelus costaricensis* Common in the southeast, first seen around Carara NP.

Blue-grey Tanager *Thraupis episcopus* Common and widespread throughout the trip [*cana*].

Palm Tanager *Thraupis palmarum* Common and widespread in the lowlands [*atripennis*].

Blue-and-gold Tanager ◊ *Bangsia arcae* (NT) (NL) Briefly at San Gerardo and Braulio Carillo NP [*caeruleigularis*].



Tanagers provided plenty of colour... male and female Passerini's Tanager above, and the splendid Silver-throated Tanager.



- Plain-colored Tanager** *Tangara inornata* Seen a couple of times at La Selva [rava].
- Emerald Tanager** *Tangara florida* Seen at Arenal, Braulio Carillo NP and best, at the bottom of Cerro Silencio.
- Silver-throated Tanager** *Tangara icterocephala* Seen well at a few sites, the first at Santa Elena [frantzii].
- Speckled Tanager** *Tangara guttata* Just a handful seen, at Talari Lodge and in Braulio Carillo NP [eusticta].
- Bay-headed Tanager** *Tangara gyrola* Small numbers at several sites, the first at Carara NP [bangsi].
- Rufous-winged Tanager** *Tangara lavinia* Decent views twice near Celeste Lodge. A scarce bird [cara].
- Golden-hooded Tanager** *Tangara larvata* Fairly common and widespread, the first at Carara.
- Spangle-cheeked Tanager** ◇ *Tangara dowii* Brilliant looks at this smart tanager around Savegre Lodge.
- Scarlet-thighed Dacnis** *Dacnis venusta* Seen well at several sites, the first in the clearing at San Gerard [nominat].
- Blue Dacnis** *Dacnis cayana* Just a few seen, the first at La Selva.
- Shining Honeycreeper** ◇ *Cyanerpes lucidus* Seen well around Arenal and in the La Selva area [isthmicus].
- Red-legged Honeycreeper** *Cyanerpes cyaneus* Quite a few seen, the first around San Gerardo [carneipes].
- Green Honeycreeper** *Chlorophanes spiza* Several seen. The 'lovely' blue male was a surprise to some! [argutus].
- Black-and-yellow Tanager** ◇ *Chrysothlypis chrysomelas* A few in flocks at Braulio Carillo NP and Cerro Silencio [titanota].
- Slaty Flowerpiercer** ◇ *Diglossa plumbea* Plenty (more than enough) seen at Volcan Irazu and Cerro de la Muerte.
- Peg-billed Finch** ◇ *Acanthidops bairdi* (NL) One retrospectively for Frank at Cerro de la Muerte.
- Slate-colored Grosbeak** *Saltator grossus* (H) Just one heard at Arenal [saturatus].

Black-headed Saltator *Saltator atriceps* Seen well at Arenal and near to Rancho Naturalista. Impressive species [nominate]!

Buff-throated Saltator *Saltator maximus* The common saltator of the lowlands, big black breast bands here [*magnoides*].

Greyish Saltator *Saltator coerulescens* Small numbers seen, the first at Ujurras [*grandis*].

Streaked Saltator *Saltator striatipectus* Just a few seen, the first in the grounds of Talari Lodge [*furax*].

Blue-black Grassquit *Volatinia jacarina* Seen at several sites, the first on the way to Hacienda Solimar [*splendens*].

Variable Seedeater (Black S) *Sporophila [corvina] corvina* See note.

Variable Seedeater (Black-breasted S) *Sporophila [corvina] ophthalmica* See note.

White-collared Seedeater *Sporophila torqueola* A few noted at Hacienda Solimar; smaller numbers elsewhere [*morelleti*].

Yellow-bellied Seedeater *Sporophila nigricollis* A good number seen around Ciudad Niely. Also near to Rancho [*nigricollis*].

Thick-billed Seed Finch *Oryzoborus funereus* Good views of a few in the Rancho Naturalista area [*ochrogyne*].

Nicaraguan Seed Finch ♦ *Oryzoborus nuttingi* Great views on the journey away from Cano Negro. Amazing bill!

Bananaquit *Coereba flaveola* Surprisingly, not that common but seen at many sites in small numbers [*mexicana*].

Yellow-faced Grassquit *Tiaris olivaceus* A trash habitat bird. Small numbers seen, the first at Curicancha. [*pusillus*].



Golden-hooded Tanager, the much-wanted White-throated Shrike-Tanager and the secretive Yellow-billed Cacique.





This Mexican Hairy Dwarf Porcupine was a great surprise at La Selva.

MAMMALS

- Black-eared Opossum (Common/Black-faced O)** *Didelphis marsupialis* One at night near Esquinas Rainforest Lodge.
- Nine-banded Armadillo (Common Long-nosed A)** *Dasybus novemcinctus* One on the lawn at Rancho Naturalista.
- Brown-throated Sloth (B-t Sloth)** *Bradypus variegatus* A couple seen, the first at La Fortuna.
- Hoffmann's Two-toed Sloth** *Choloepus hoffmanni* Just one of these weird creatures seen at Heliconias Lodge.
- Northern Tamandua** *Tamandua mexicana* A brilliant sighting at Arenal. A superb creature!
- White-throated Capuchin (W-faced C)** *Cebus capucinus* Seen at a few sites, first at Hacienda Solimar.
- Mantled Howler (M H Monkey)** *Alouatta palliata* Great sounds and seen several times, first at Carara.
- Geoffrey's Spider Monkey (Black-handed S M)** *Ateles geoffroyi* Amazing views a couple of times.
- Tapeti (Forest Rabbit)** *Sylvilagus brasiliensis* A couple seen, the first at night on Cerro de la Muerte.
- Central American Agouti** *Dasyprocta punctata* Quite common and comical!
- Mexican Hairy Dwarf Porcupine** *Sphiggurus mexicanus* Amazing views of one at La Selva!
- Red-tailed Squirrel (Tropical Red S)** *Sciurus granatensis* Quite a few seen.
- Variiegated Squirrel** *Sciurus variegatoides* Also reasonably plentiful.
- Bang's Mountain Squirrel (Panama M S)** *Syntheosciurus brochus* We believe we saw this one at Cerro de la Muerte.
- Tayra** *Eira barbara* Great views of an arboreal individual at Rancho Naturalista.
- Neotropical Otter** *Lontra longicaudis* (NL) One for some at the Rincon Bridge.
- White-nosed Coati** *Nasua narica* Quite a few seen including some pallid old-looking individuals!
- Kinkajou** *Potos flavus* Great spotlight views at Esquinas Rainforest Lodge.
- Collared Peccary** *Tayassu tajacu* Scarily confiding and smelly at La Selva!!

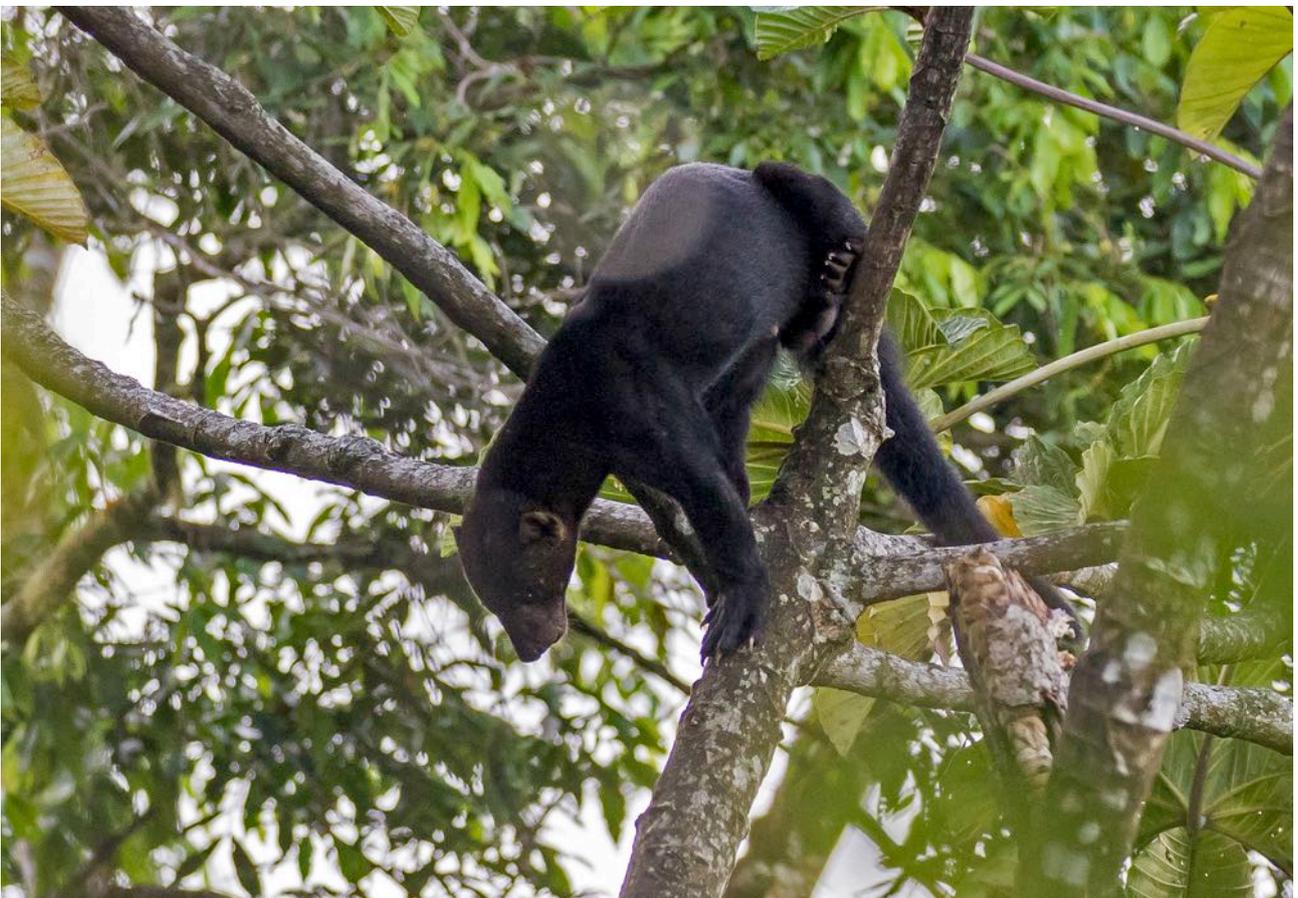
Common Bottle-nosed Dolphin *Tursiops truncatus* A small pod seen off the Osa Peninsula.

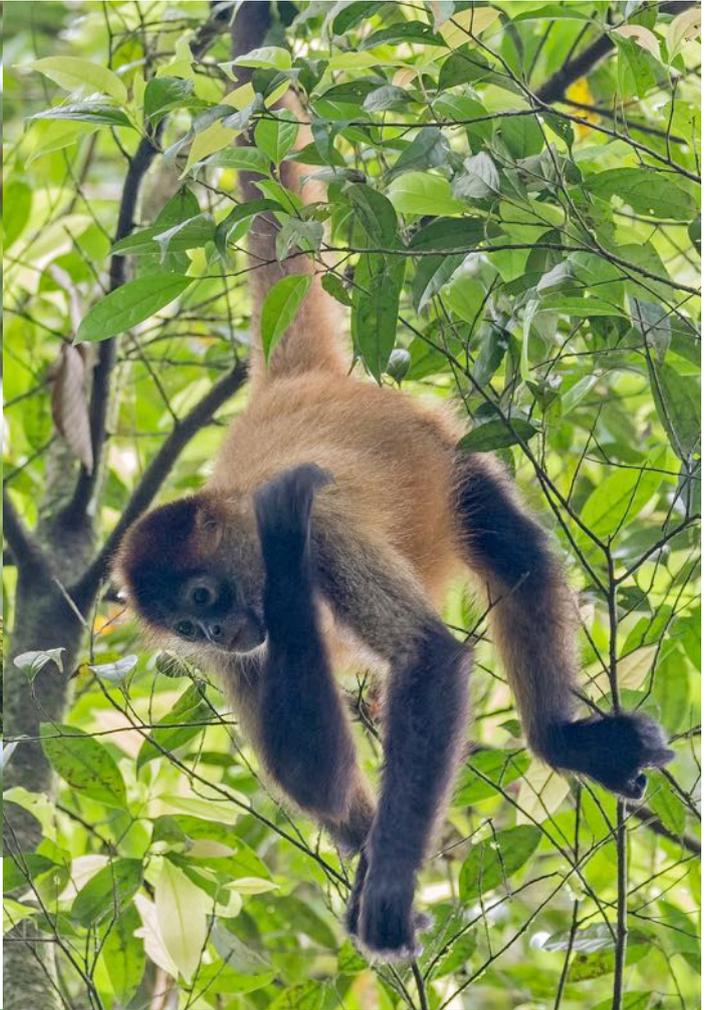
Central American Red Brocket *Mazama temama* One in the forest at Carara NP.

Honduran White Bat *Ectophylla alba* Amazing creatures under the banana leaves. Incredible they stayed!



More class mammals included Honduran White Bat, the amazing Brown-throated Sloth and a surprise Tayra at Rancho Naturalista.





More smart mammals included noisy Mantled Howler Monkeys at several sites, Geoffrey's Spider Monkeys which were very inquisitive, and White-nosed Coatis which included some surprisingly large groups!





Taxonomy is in constant change... until recently this Cabanis's Wren was part of Plain Wren, which is now three species, all of which we see on this tour!

NOTES TO THE SYSTEMATIC LIST

The most up to date referenced taxonomic list referred to in the Tour Report is that of the IOC World Bird Names. (Gill, F and Donsker, D Eds). 2017. IOC World Bird Names v7.2. Available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>

White-throated Crake *Laterallus albigularis*

We recorded two subspecies of this widespread crake. We enjoyed great views of the form *cinereiceps* at Sendero Bogarin, near to La Fortuna, and we heard the nominate form at the marsh near to San Vito and other sites in the south.

Blue-vented Hummingbird *Amazilia hoffmanni*

First seen at Hacienda Solimar and then a few seen well around Monteverde, especially around Cala Lodge. Note that the IOC has now split this species from Steely-vented Hummingbird *A. saucerrottei*.

Volcano Hummingbird *Selasphorus flammula*

We noted two forms of this small and attractive species. The nominate *flammula* (Purple-throated) was first seen well at the Irazú Volcano, whilst the form *torridus* (Heliotrope-throated) was the form on Cerro de la Muerte where it was common.

Collared Trogon *Trogon collaris*

We saw two forms of this widespread species. The form *aurantiventris* (Orange-Bellied) was seen well in the Monteverde area, the first at San Gerardo. The form *puella* (Bar-tailed) was first seen later in the trip. The former was in the past sometimes regarded as a separate species.

Buff-throated Foliage-gleaner *Automolus ochrolaemus*

We noted two quite different forms of this widespread species, and with such marked differences vocally across its range, it's hard to believe a split is not on the way! The Caribbean form, *hypophaeus* was seen at Arenal and Braulio Carillo NP, whilst the Pacific form, *exsertus*, was first seen well at Carara NP.

Grey-throated Leaf-tosser *Sclerurus albigularis*

Excellent views of the form *canigularis* at San Gerardo and again at Curicancha. The first sighting at San Gerardo was most intriguing as it was a bird sat in the entrance to its nest burrow, no more than a metre away!! I would guess, judging by the pale bill, this was a recently fledged and very surprised juvenile bird!

Alder Flycatcher / Willow Flycatcher *Empidonax alnorum/traillii*

We saw one individual well from the Rincon Bridge, and actually there were others distantly in the wet fields at Esquinas Rainforest Lodge. My suspicion is they were Willow Flycatchers. However, the well photographed bird I circulated amongst various 'expert' friends and got mixed and hesitant opinions. No conclusion was reached! I think, as I said at the time, non-calling birds are best left unidentified.

White-breasted Wood Wren *Henicorhina leucosticta*

We saw two forms of this widespread species. It's worth keeping a track of this one as splits are likely! The forms we saw were *costaricensis* (first seen at Arenal) and *pittieri* seen at Los Cusingos (Skutch's Garden) and heard at Esquinas Rainforest Lodge.

Variable Seedeater (Black S) *Sporophila [corvina] corvina*

Variable Seedeater (Black-breasted S) *Sporophila [corvina] ophthalmica*

We saw these two very different forms of this species, and indeed the two forms are treated as separate species by the Handbook of Birds of the World/Birdlife International. The nominate all black form was common in the Caribbean lowlands, being first seen around San Gerardo. This all black Caribbean form is split by HBW as Black Seedeater. The pied form *hoffmanni* was first seen at Carara and was common in the southwest. This form is split as part of a species known as Black-breasted Seedeater *S. ophthalmica* by HBW.



Two more... a smart displaying Red-winged Blackbird and a distinctive Black-capped Flycatcher.



Our bird-of-the-trip... The friendly Streak-chested Antpitta!

TOP 10 BIRDS OF THE TOUR

- 1st **STREAK-CHESTED ANTPITTA**
- 2nd **SUNBITTERN**
- 3rd **THREE-WATTLED BELLBIRD**
- 4th **White-collared Manakin**
- 5th **Thicket Tinamou**
- 6th **Buffy-crowned Wood Partridge**
- 7th **Scarlet Macaw**
- 8th **Spotted Wood Quail**
- 9th **Swallow-tailed Kite**
- 10th **Central American Pygmy Owl**

(A total of 47 species received at least one vote!)



Resplendent Quetzal didn't even make it into the top ten!

OTHER INTERESTING WILDLIFE!



Costa Rica is a great country for herps! Clockwise, from top left, Milk Snake (remember: red next to yellow can kill a fellow; red next to black, venom lack!!); an amazing Basalisk; Green-and-black Poison Dart Frog; Red-eyed Tree Frog; Boa Constrictor and a Puffing Snake!





Another gorgeous Red-eyed Tree Frog, an incredible Eyelash Viper, an Owl Butterfly and a gorgeous Atlas Moth.





The group, with Luis our trusty driver on the left, and Harry on the right, and scenery at Arenal!

